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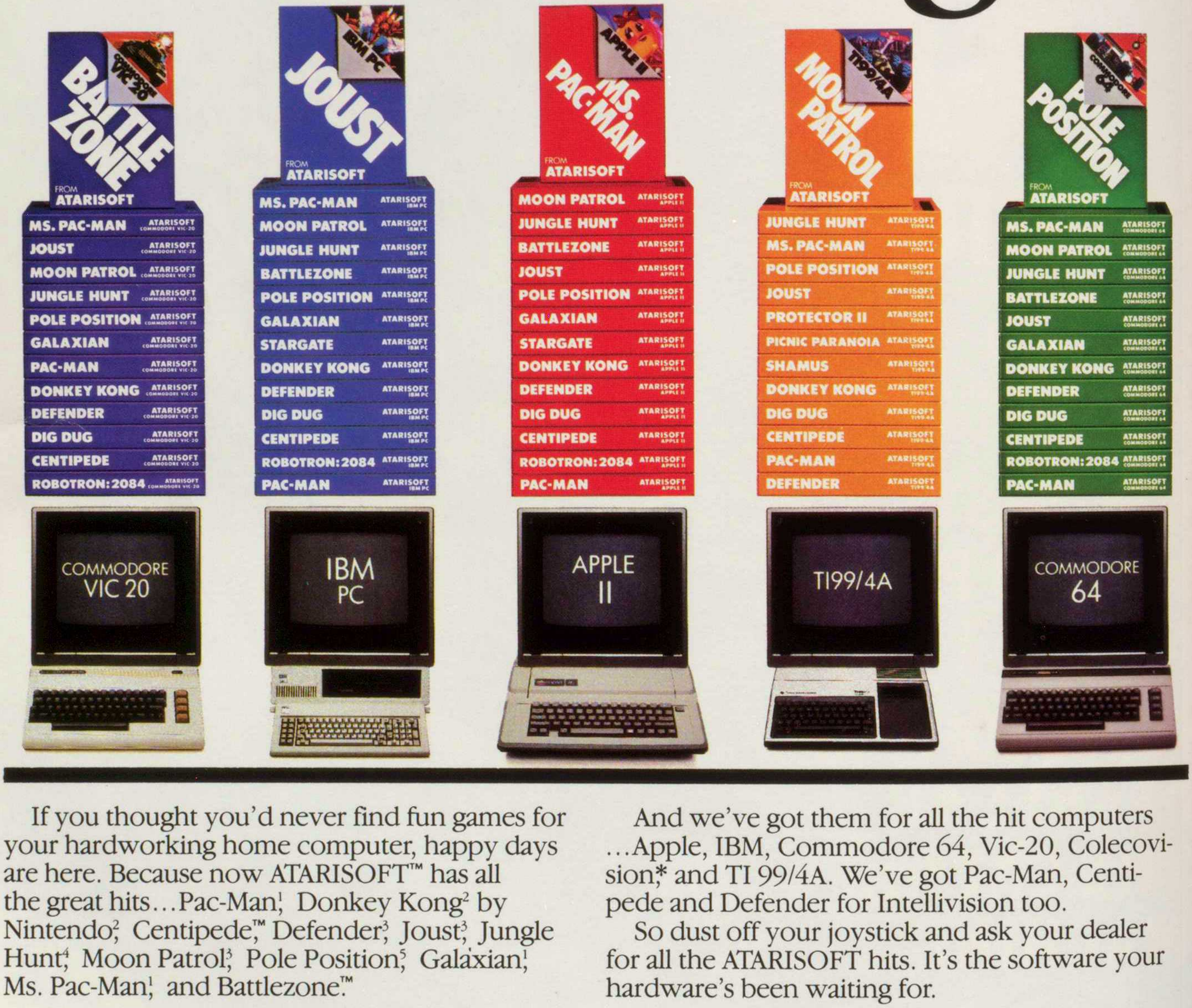
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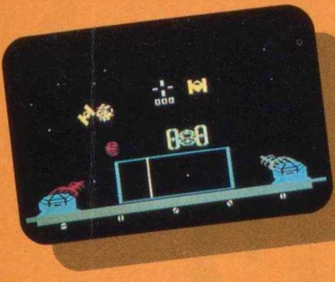

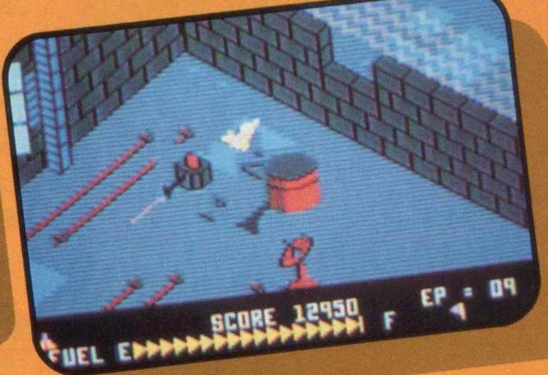

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COMPUTER GAMES™

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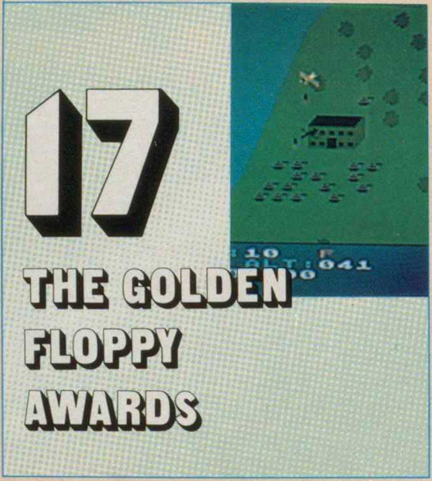

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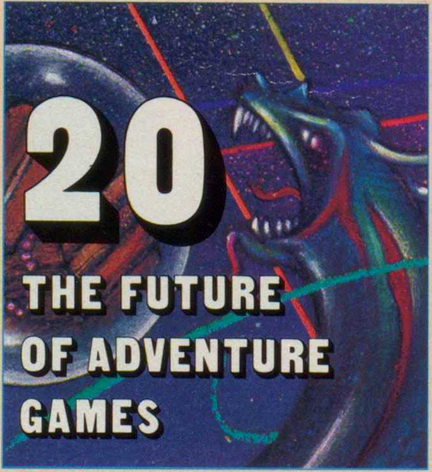

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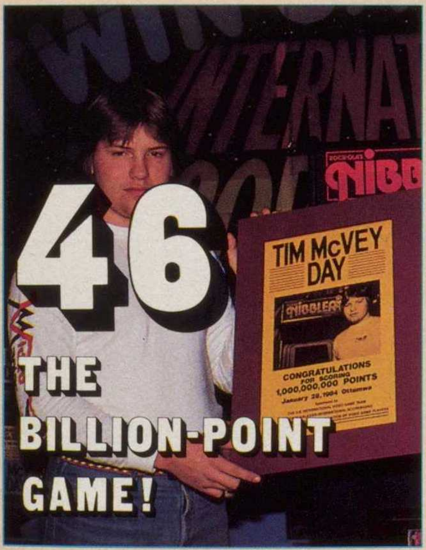

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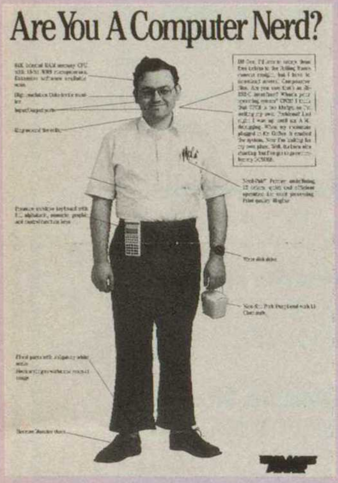
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

ANGRY YOUNG NERDS

To answer your inquiry, yes, I am, in a very basic way. What I am most certainly not is an infantile, 12-year-old, retarded customer for the type of wares you and your magazine peddle. You may feel free to peddle the "portrait" to any imbecile of your choice.

Jorge A. Silva


Are You A Computer Nerd?

FREE 3-D

When I bought *Subroc* for ColecoVision, I knew it was supposed to be 3-D. When I played it, it didn't look 3-D at all. So I put on 3-D glasses and it looked 3-D. Does Coleco know about this?

Billy Scher

TEMPEST TRICKS

I am writing in response to your segment on getting 40 free credits on *Tempest*. You said to use 11 for the last two digits. This is the worst possible combination. It causes the coin counters in the machine to activate, and the reading will show the game to be short $10. This has caused attendants on duty to be seriously questioned by arcade owners. The correct digits should be 17 or 18.

Dave Plummer

Commodore VIC

Commodore's VIC-20—Is it lost in space?

VIC-20 DEAD?

I've heard a rumor about Commodore discontinuing the VIC-20. Is this true? If so, when?

R.G. Colguitt

Officially, Commodore is still making the VIC. But we're seeing it less and less in stores, and most of the software companies have switched their emphasis to the Commodore 64.

AW SHUCKS

You know what I like about your magazine? You don't print all those self-congratulatory letters saying how great your magazine is. That's why you have the best magazine. Keep up the good work.

Smadda Namtug

HE'S RIGHT!

Anyone who opens a game review with "I hate this type of game" (*Enduro* vs. *Pole Position*) should not be reviewing that game. If someone hates all of a certain genre of entertainment, whether it be a movie, music or computer game, what aficionado of that genre could care less what the reviewer has to say? In the future, please have people who enjoy a certain type of game review games in that category. This person is far more likely to know what to look for in a game and write a fair review.

Anonymous VG Programmer

COLECO HATER

Just what does Coleco think it's trying to pull? Its promises to deliver hardware and software have always fallen through. The Adam computer still hasn't appeared in my town, and now they're raising the price. Where does that leave the people who have not even seen Adam in the stores yet? In addition, a recently delivered issue of Coleco's *Experience* magazine is nothing more than a rewrite of the issue before.

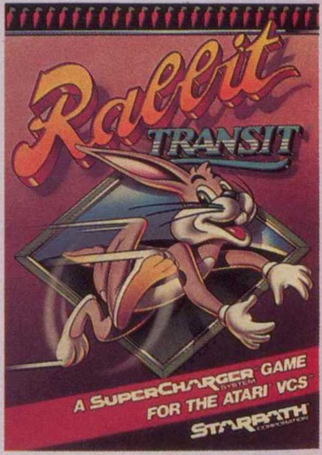
Joe Blenkle

On the other hand . . .

COLECO LOVER

As one of the lucky first owners of Adam, I'd like to say that it does indeed live up to most of its hype and promises, and for the price, nothing else comes close. While the overall look is rather strange and kind of plastic-like, it does do about everything it's supposed to do and then some. The SmartBasic Data pack takes about 59 seconds to load, as does the *Buck Rogers* game. You have about 26K or RAM for BASIC programs, which isn't bad. The word processing works fine, and will probably be expanded in the future. The printer is kind of slow and noisy, but still well within tolerance levels for any typing machine. And Adam is video game heaven.

Jeff Silva



PUN INTENDED

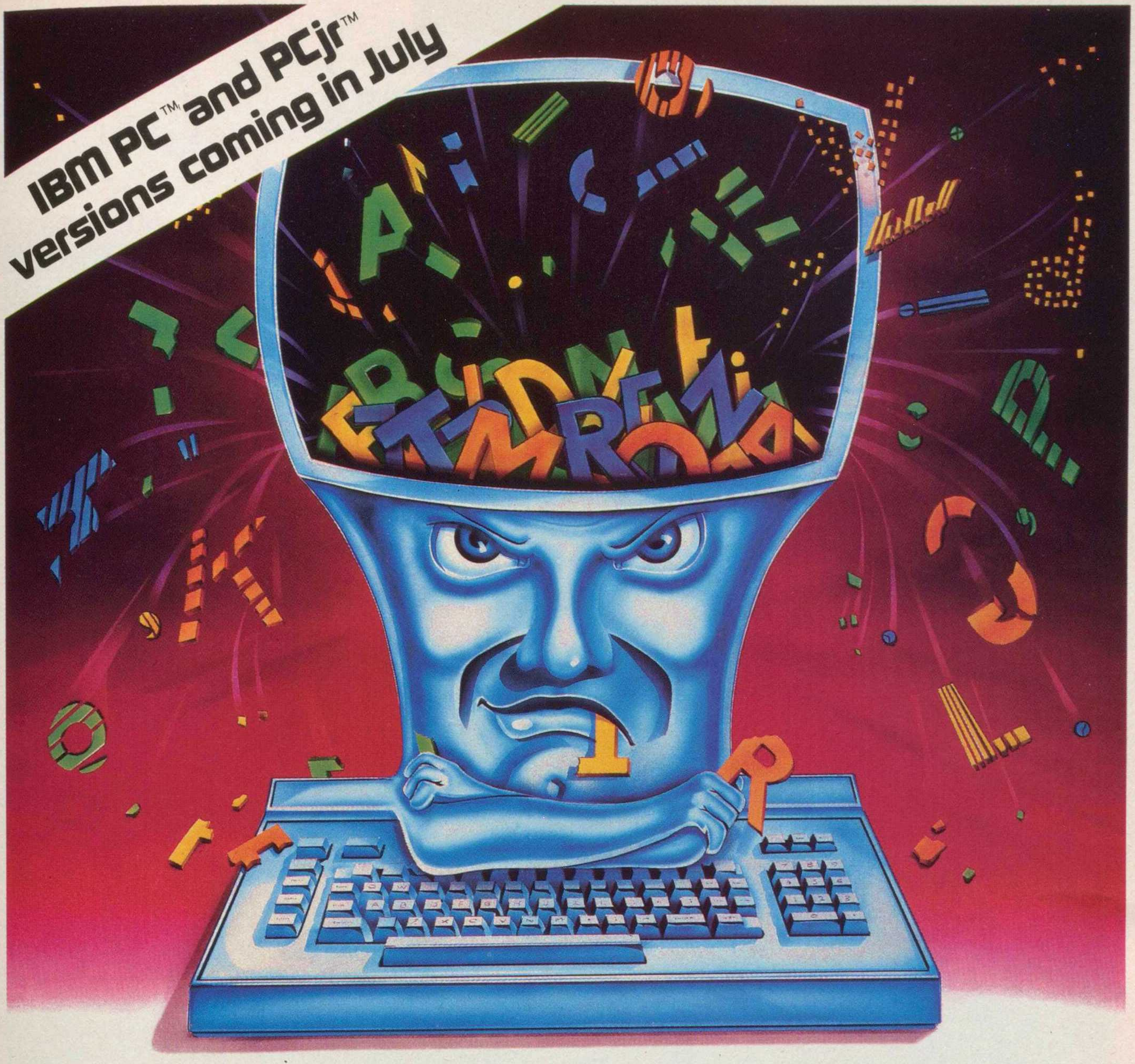
In your February issue on page 22, you mistakenly call one of Starpath's games *Rabid Transit* instead of *Rabbit Transit*. Despite your mistake, I do not believe that your fine magazine is going to the dogs. Ha, ha.

Jon Boss

500 LIVES?!

Do any *Phoenix* players want to know how to get 500 lives per game? Jerk the on/off switch

CONTINUED ON PAGE 58



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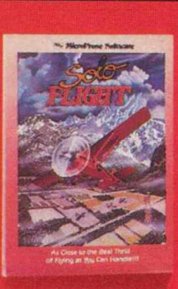
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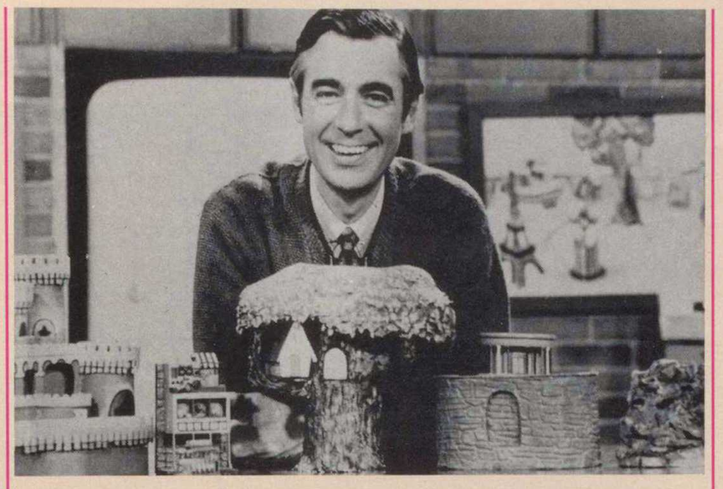
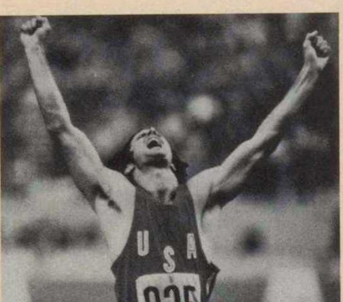
FIRST NEWS WAVE

HOT GOSSIP

Don Bluth's follow-up to **Space Ace** will be **Sea Beast** ... **Dragon's Lair,** the first laserdisc game, is soon to be a feature-length **movie**...**Broderbund** will release Ultrasoft's **Mask of the Sun** for Commodore 64 and Atari computers ...In the latest **Infocom** catalog, they describe a game called **Eggplant Kong**, in which you have to climb a skyscraper and serve **eggplant parmesan** to opera star **Luciano Palaverotti**...**Bruce Jenner** to star in an upcoming laser game by **Stern**...Another laser manufacturer, **Simutrek** (they made **Cube Quest**), has filed for **bankruptcy**...A new study reveals that playing computer games causes **less** hostility than playing **darts** or watching TV. The study also found that computer games do **not** improve eye-hand coordination...Just about all the game designers from **Sirius Software** are now working for **Activision**. In the Activision labs, they have a running contest for high scores. **Mark Turmell** and **Dan Thompson** are in the 400,000s on **Steve Cartright's Frostbite**...**Walter Day** and the **Twin Galaxies** International Scoreboard are up and moving from **Ottumwa, Iowa**, to **Orlando, Florida**. Where does that make the "Video Game Capital of the World"?...**CBS Software** has signed **Mr. Rogers** to develop educational software with them...News for **Bushnell** watchers—**Sente** to introduce a laser game with a **hydraulically** powered flight simulator that will **lift** the player **two feet in the air** and **tilt** in all directions. Also expect **Atari** to release Bushnell's **Androbot** robot products, including one that will link up with the **Atari VCS** ...**Milton Bradley** lost **$31 million** on their now-defunct **Vectrex** video game system...The company that bought **Intellivision** from **Mattel** will be called **Intellivision Inc.**, and they claim they will have five **new** games out for the system shortly...**Bill Budge**, the inventor of **Pinball Construction Set**, gets $4 for every copy that is sold...Do you wonder how software companies get their **names**? **Penguin Software** is loosely based on the famous "penguin on the telly" skit by **Monty Python's Flying Circus**. **Micro Lab** got its name when president **Stan Goldberg**'s 10-year-old son **Keith** said the family living room was so cluttered with computer equipment that it looked like a "**micro-computer lab**." Keith, now 14, is Micro Lab's **Chief Game Tester**...The grizzly **hanging** scene has been removed from many **Cliff Hanger** games... Games based on the **Bible** are here! **Davka Corp.** has released **Moses and the Mountain**, **David and Goliath** and **Samson and Delilah** for Apple and Commodore 64. In **Samson and Delilah** you have to bring down the temple on the **Philistines** by prying apart the pillars ...**Atarisoft** will add learning and home management to their list of hit **arcade** titles. **Navic Software** to introduce **Jury Trial II**, a courtroom strategy game for Apple, Commodore 64 and IBM PC...**Data East** is introducing two new arcade games—**Tag Team Wrestling** and **Cobra Command**, the latter of which is a **laser**. Their first laser game, **Bega's Battle**, was a **bomb**...15-year-old **Bruce Richmond** has designed a game called **Chicago Politics: Mayor Harold vs. Fast Eddie**. The game is based on real Chicago politics—the object is to adjourn as many meetings as quickly as you can, smashing opposing aldermen along the way...**Penguin** reports that their adventure games are outselling all others two to one...

Hard to believe department—the TI 99 4/A was introduced in 1979 at $1150. Now you can get it for $50...Pizza Time Theatre is selling Sente. Are you interested in buying a game company? 'Till next time...





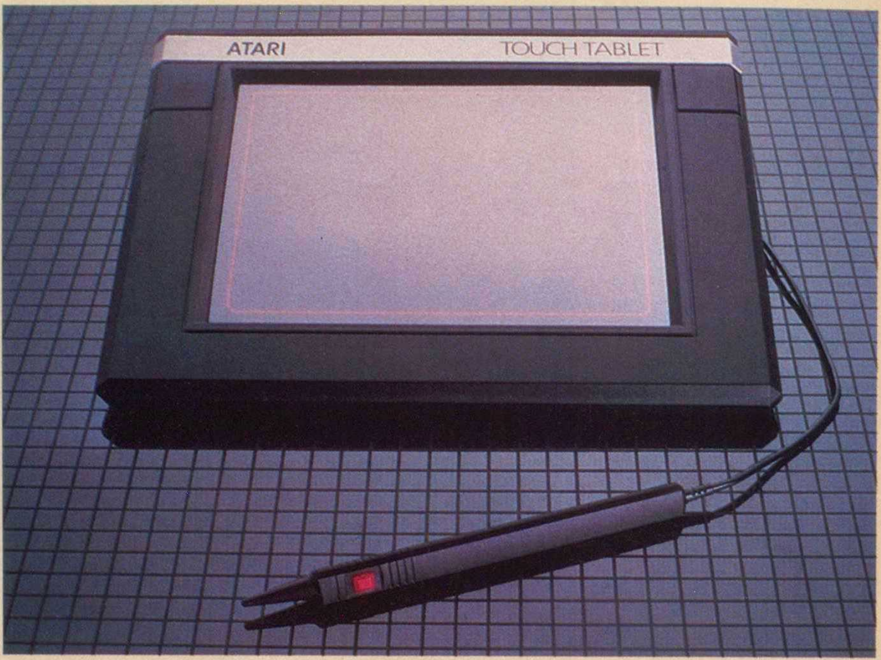
It's a lovely day in Silicon Valley now that Mr. Rogers (top) has inked a deal to do educational software with CBS. Keep an eye out for a movie version of Don Bluth's ***Dragon's Lair,*** *and his next game,* ***Sea Beast.*** *Bruce Jenner (left) who was promoting Activision's* ***Decathlon*** *last year, is now starring in his own laser game by Stern.*

NEW PRODUCTS

ART ON A CART...

Atari's new Touch Tablet differs from the KoalaPad in the type of instrument used to draw on the tablet—instead of an ordinary stylus, you get an electronic pen that's wired to the tablet. This way you can execute various functions and select menus by pressing the fire button. Another difference is that the software, *AtariArtist,* is on cartridge rather than disk.

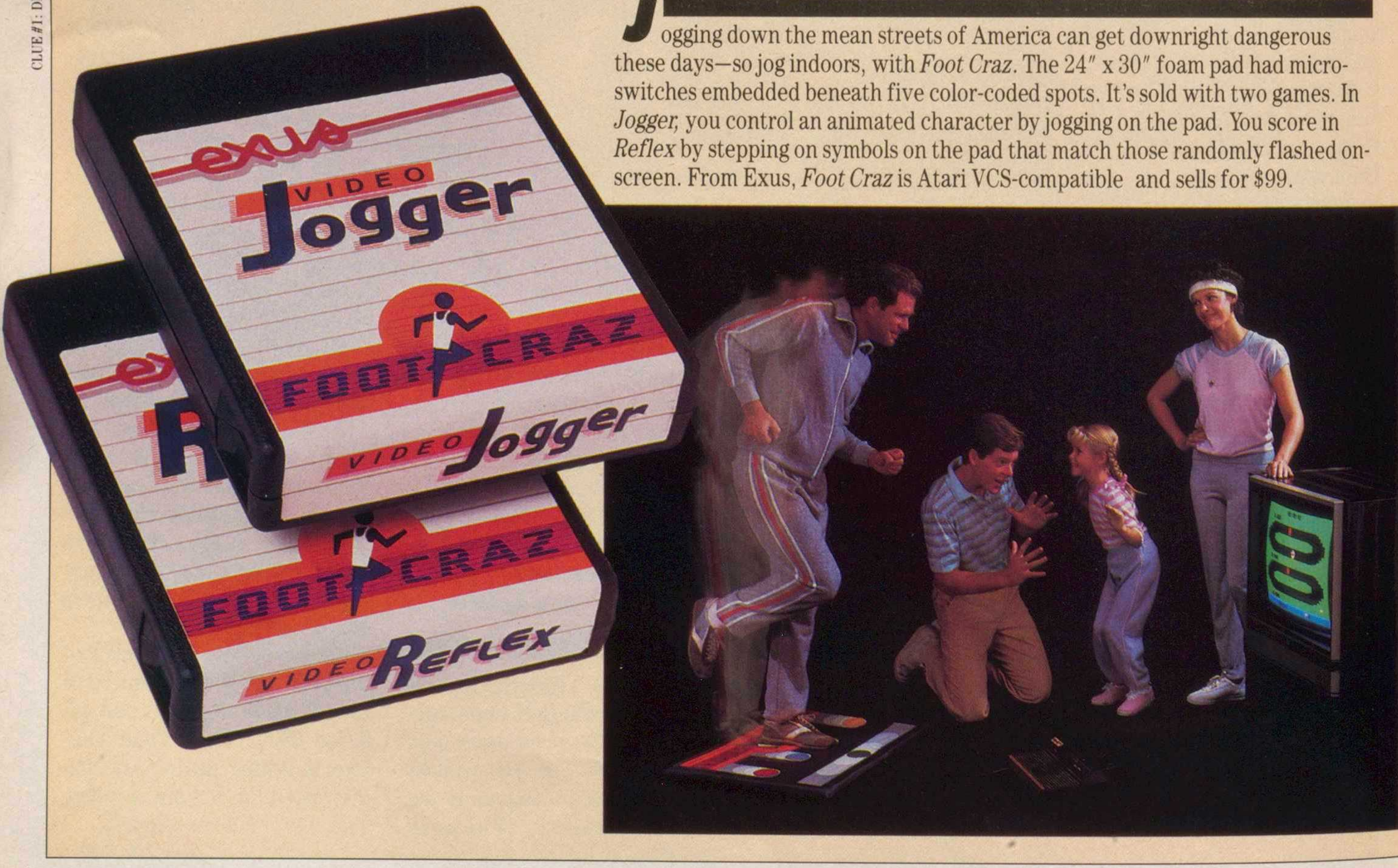
AtariArtist includes features like automatic circles and squares, color fill (with a 128-color menu) and most of the standard "computer art" options you'd expect from such a program. Compatible with the entire line of Atari computers, the Touch Tablet and *AtariArtist* retail for $89.95.



CLUE #1: DESIGNED BY FERNANDO HERRARA

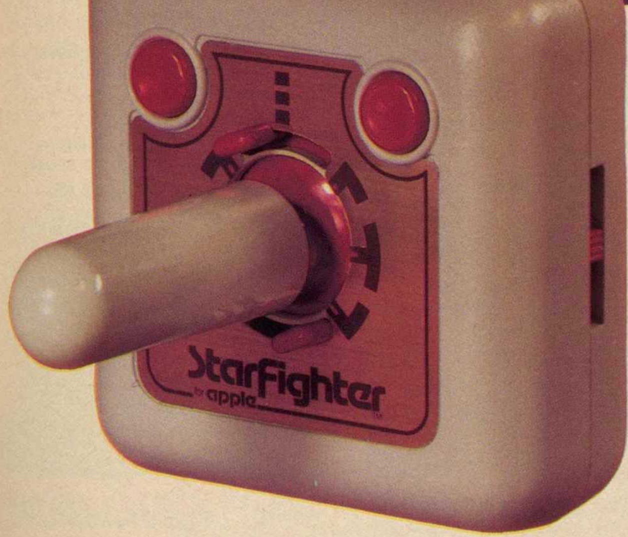
FOOTLOOSE

Jogging down the mean streets of America can get downright dangerous these days—so jog indoors, with *Foot Craz*. The 24″ x 30″ foam pad had microswitches embedded beneath five color-coded spots. It's sold with two games. In *Jogger,* you control an animated character by jogging on the pad. You score in *Reflex* by stepping on symbols on the pad that match those randomly flashed on-screen. From Exus, *Foot Craz* is Atari VCS-compatible and sells for $99.



KILLER JOYSTICK

What makes a joystick stand out from the pack? The degree to which you can "customize" it to respond more accurately. Starfighter's Apple version allows players to vary three key adjustments. The throw distance can be switched between "short throw" for maze games and "long throw," better for shoot-'em-ups. You can also center the vertical and horizontal axes. From Suncom, it goes for $49.95.



QUIET ON THE SET

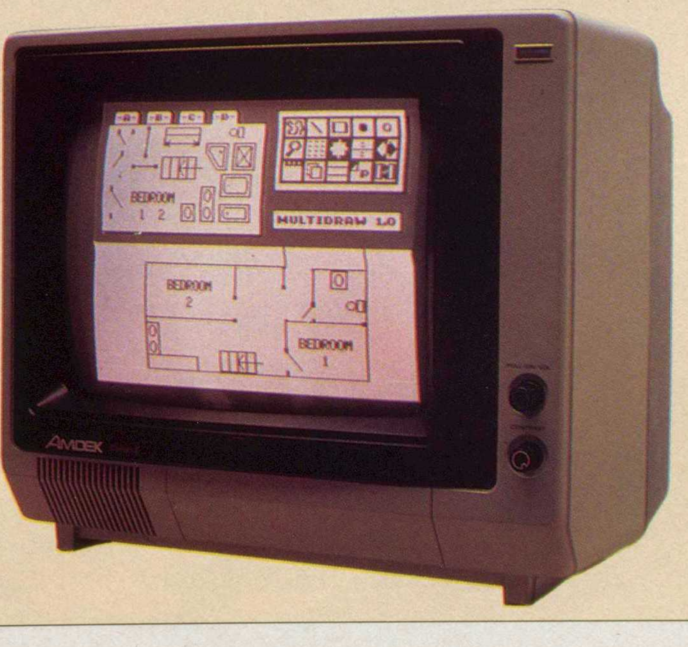
Most printers make more racket than the Marines machine-gunning their way across the beaches of Grenada. If you want to give peace and quiet a chance, check out Hewlett Packard's new HP 2225 ink-jet printer. It prints an amazing 150 cps at a noise level under 50 db, and is small and light enough to qualify as portable.

Previous ink-jet printers have been messy, due to clogged lines and the need for refilling the ink reservoir. Not the HP 2225, which combines the reservoir and print head in a throw-away unit that's easily replaced (for under $10) after 500 pages. The 11 x 12 dot-matrix characters and full graphics capability allow for detailed, easy-to-read hard copy. For HP, Apple, IBM and other home computers, the HP 2225 is available for less than $500, making it a real bargain.

BLINDED BY THE LIGHT PEN

Ready to paint that computer masterpiece? By enabling you to draw directly on the screen, the Gibson Light Pen delivers the true "feel" of real painting—unlike joystick-controlled graphics software. Four programs accompany the pen: "PenPainter," "Pen Animator," "PenMusician" and "PenDesigner." The first three are home- oriented, while "PenDesigner" is for designing technical and business-oriented graphics.

With the included "PenTrak language," you can implement the pen in your own programs. And most popular dot matrix printers will churn out hard copies of your creations in black and white. Initially for the Apple II family, it will be released for the PC, PCjr and C-64 later this year, and Koala Technologies is pricing the Gibson Light Pen around $249.



WHAT'S IN STORE FOR YOU?

FUTURE RELEASES FROM THE TOP GAME COMPANIES

ACTIVISION
Keystone Kapers, Warp Wars (AT, COL, IN). Private Eye, Pitfall II (VCS). Baloony Bin (64).

ATARI
Realsports Baseball (5200). Taz (VCS). The Legacy, Choplifter (AT).

BRODERBUND
Bank St. Writer (PCjr, PC). Spare Change (64). Operation Whirlwind, Bank St. Writer, Matchboxes (64). Lode Runner (PC). Skyblazer, Seafox, Mastertype (VIC). Serpentine (PC).

CREATIVE
In the Chips (PCjr). Creative Writer, Creative Filer, Creative Calc (64, PC, PCjr). Pipes, Save New York (PCjr).

DATAMOST
Dallas Quest (AP). Swashbuckler (64).

DATASOFT
Mindset Designer (Mindset). Juno First, Gumby, Heathcliff (AT, AP, 64, PCjr). Lost Tomb, Nibbler, Bruce Lee (AT, AP, PCjr).

DYNACOMP
Diggerbonk, Flip Sketch, The Bean Machine (AT). Genesis, Talking Typewriter, Domino (AP). The Food Computer, World Geography (TRS).

DYNATECH
Adventurewriter (64).

EPYX
Puzzlemania (AP, 64). Robots of Dawn, Fun with Words.

HES
Chameleon, The Pit, Tri Math, HES Cat, HES Font, Music Box, HES Games, Minnesota Fats Pool Challenge, Super Zaxxon (64). Type 'N' Write (64, PC and AP). Factory, Ghost Manor/Spike's Peak, Cell Defense, Missing Links, The Pond (AT, 64). Oubliette, Turtle Graphics II (COL).

IMAGIC
Microsurgeon, Demon Attack (PCjr).

INFOCOM
The Sorcerer, Seastalker (All computers). All titles now available for Osborne and ADAM (but not Adam Osborne).

INTERPHASE
Vextralian (COL/ADAM). Player, Smuggler's Cove, Blockade Runner (64, IN, COL/ADAM). Viking Raider (64). Aquattack (COL/ADAM).

MUSE
Super Text Professional (AT).

PARKER BROTHERS
Gyruss, Star Wars the Arcade Game, James Bond 007 (64, VCS, 5200, AT, COL). Chess (PC). Mr. Do.

PENGUIN
Expedition Amazon, Xyphus, Ring Quest, Magic Paintbrush (AP). The Quest (AT, 64, PC). The Spy Strikes Back, Spy's Demise (64). The Coveted Mirror, Minit Man (AT, 64).

QUICKSILVA
Aquaplan, Bugaboo, Purple Turtles, Ring of Power, Ultisynth, Quintic Warrior, Sting (64). Skyhawk, Tornado (VIC). Ulti-sketch (AT). Time Gate, Xadom, Astro-Blaster, 3D Strategy, Ant Attack, The Chess Velnor's Lair, Trader, Traxx, Mined Out (TS 2068).

SAMS
Spud, Mug Shot (AP).

SEGA
Star Trek III (AP, AT, 64, PC, PCjr). Zaxxon (5200, AT, 64).

SIERRA ON-LINE
King's Quest (PCjr). Snokie (AT). Championship Boxing (PC and PCjr). The Prisoner (AP).

SIRIUS
Wavy Navy, Type Attack (64).

STRATEGIC SIMULATIONS
Questron (AP).

SUBLOGIC
Flight Simulator II (64, AT). Night Mission Pinball (64, PC).

SYNAPSE
Enigma (AT). Quasimodo, New York City (AT, 64). Midnight Patrol (PC). Slamball, Super Zaxxon, Necromancer, Zeppelin, Picnic Paranoia, Shamus Case II (64).

THORN EMI
Liberator, Submarine Commander (AP). Computer War (TI).

VCS = Atari VCS, IN = Intellivision, 5200 = Atari 5200, AT = Atari Home computers, COL = ColecoVision, GEM = Coleco Gemini, VIC = Commodore VIC-20, 64 = Commodore 64, AP = Apple II, TRS = Radio Shack TRS-80, TI = Texas Instruments TI 99/4A, VEC = Vectrex, PC = IBM PC, ODY = Odyssey^2.

HIT GAMES & HIGH SCORES

COMPUTER GAMES

1. *FLIGHT SIMULATOR II (Sublogic)*
2. *ZORK I (Infocom)*
3. *LODERUNNER (Broderbund)*
4. *BEACH-HEAD (Access)*
5. *BLUE MAX (Synapse)*
6. *ONE ON ONE (Electronic Arts)*
7. *ULTIMA III (Origin Systems)*
8. *ARCHON (Electronic Arts)*
9. *PINBALL CONSTRUCTION SET (Electronic Arts)*
10. *DEADLINE (Infocom)*

VIDEO GAMES

1. *Q*BERT (Parker)*
2. *POLE POSITION (Atari)*
3. *JOUST (Atari)*
4. *MS. PAC-MAN (Atari)*
5. *CONGO BONGO (Sega)*
6. *DIG DUG (Atari)*
7. *POPEYE (Parker)*
8. *SPACE SHUTTLE (Activision)*
9. *FRONT LINE (Coleco)*
10. *CENTIPEDE (Atari)*

ARCADE GAMES

1. *TRACK & FIELD (Centuri)*
2. *POLE POSITION (Atari)*
3. *M.A.C.H. III (Mylstar)*
4. *FIRE FOX (Atari)*
5. *DRAGON'S LAIR (Cinematronics)*
6. *SPACE ACE (Cinematronics)*
7. *ELEVATOR ACTION (Taito)*
8. *SPY HUNTER (Bally/Midway)*
9. *TAPPER (Bally/Midway)*
10. *NFL FOOTBALL (Bally/Midway)*

HIGH SCORES

M.A.C.H. III: 348,800
by King Brown
STAR WARS: 86,998,553
by Jay Woodard
ELEVATOR ACTION: 60,500
by Mike Ward
DISCS OF TRON: 138,600
by Steve Harris
DRAGON'S LAIR: 558,724
(level 5)
by Jud Boone
POLE POSITION: 66,910
by Mike Klug
CRYSTAL CASTLES:
13,150,100
by Jay Carter

Our thanks to World Game Records (POB 338, Dayton, Ohio, 45449) for the high scores.

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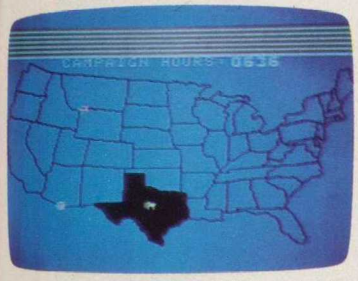

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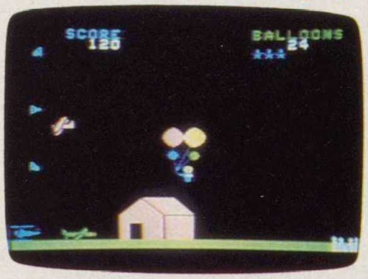

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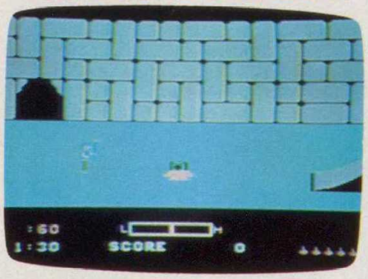
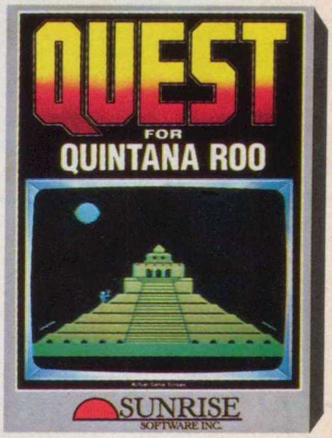
AN ARCHEOLOGIST!





QUEST FOR QUINTANA ROO™

Help Yucatan Sam explore dozens of terror-filled chambers that create The Mystical Temple of the Mayan God Quintana Roo. Supplies are limited, so use them with caution. Time in the temple is a matter of life or death, but risk is part of solving this Mayan Mystery.

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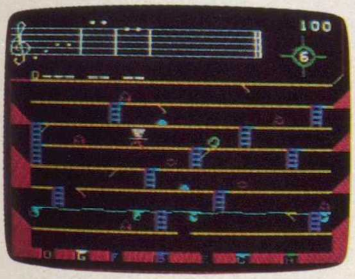
A MAESTRO!



ROLLOVERTURE™

Scurry madly about the orchestra, directing notes to their proper order. Climb ladders, throw levers, reverse the conveyor belt. Incorrect placements will increase difficulty but proper placement rewards you with a classical overture.

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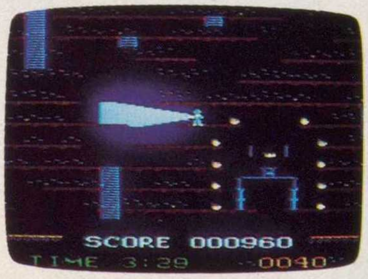

mountain king™

Welcome to the land down under, where eerie melodies provide challenging hints to test your exploration skills. Armed with a flashlight and raw courage, you must use all your senses and abilities to locate the flame spirit, enter the tomb, and escape with the crown.

Available for Colecovision™, Adam™, and IBM PCjr™ home computers.

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THE COMPUTER GAMES GAZETTE

HELP US!

In order to help us plan articles for future issues, please answer this question and send it in to us . . .

What is your favorite type of computer game?

Sports__________
Arcade__________
Adventure__________
Driving__________

Please check one and send this coupon or a replica to: Help Us, Computer Games, 888 7th Ave., New York, NY 10106.

Science fiction fans of all ages and computer formats have long thrilled to Anne McCaffrey's *Dragonrider* series of novels. The Epyx gang was apparently among them, and so Ms. McCaffrey's *Dragonriders of Pern* has been adapted for the Atari and Commodore 64 home computers. Epyx already has plans to release a second McCaffrey-based computer game.

Here, the silver-haired scribe herself joins Epyx prez Michael Katz in front of the design team's handiwork. "I love the graphics—they're terrific!" she was reported to say. Along with an Epyx tour, Ms. McCaffrey also received the first copy of the *Dragonriders* game.

ACTIVISION

ENDURO TEST

The Datsun 280 ZX, with the familiar logo blanketed across it, was Activision's top prize in its recent "Race to Riches" Sweepstakes. The winner, a 33-year-old aluminum grinder (whatever *that* is) named Michael Kanalos, was one of more than 300,000 contest entrants. He also drove away with a trip to Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas for a Grand Prix. Handing him the keys is Kris James, an Activision merchandiser, and looking on is Tom Norman, toy department manager for the J.C. Penney's store where the Renton, Washington, foundry worker submitted his winning form.

BEATING AROUND THE BUSHNELL

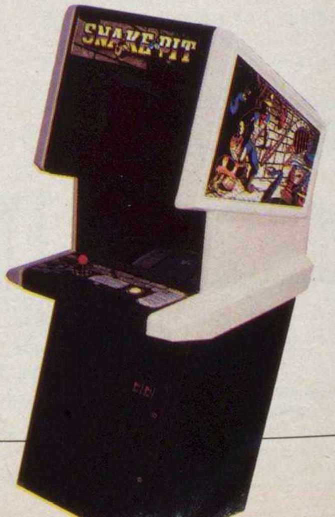
We who play arcade games rarely notice the business end of things. Arcade owners, of course, have to. That's why the long-awaited *Snake Pit*—the first game from Atari cofounder Nolan Bushnell's Sente Technologies—really *is* as revolutionary as he says.

The game by itself may not be: Outback Jack's adventures through pits and ruins on the way to the Golden Amulet of Alaron is well done, but nothing new. The revolution here is that *Snake Pit* is the first interchangeable arcade game.

Currently, much of a coin-op game's cost is reflected in the cabinet. The cabinets cost the game companies a lot to build, and so games cost arcade owners a lot to buy. The Sente solution is to sell the cabinet just once, and send conversion kits with each new game.

The main Game Frame, as it's called, can be converted from one video game to another by an arcade owner changing a few graphics panels and inserting a 14-ounce SAC (for Sente Arcade Computer) cartridge. The Game Frame is a lot like a home video game console.

Anything to make the business less of a risk is naturally beneficial. Bushnell, the man who put video games on the map, may be taking them, once again, to the bank.



IF YOU KNEW SUZY...

Suzy Chaffee—the World Freestyle ski champ also known as Suzy Chapstik when she pushed *that* product—has just slalomed into the hearts of our amigos at Amiga.

Sexy Suzy is the new spokesperson for Amiga and that company's Joyboard controller. A first-person skiing game, *Mogul Maniac* was, you'll recall, one of Amiga's first Joyboard entries. Suzy will go on a national tour to promote the joy of Joyboarding, and Amiga plans to feature her in a Celebrity Pro-Am Joyboard/Mogul Maniac race to be cablecast on ESPN. The company recently co-sponsored the Michelin World Freestyle Invitational/Hawaiian Tropic Celebrity Pro-Am tournament in Breckenridge, Colorado, known for one of the longest titles in sports history.

KIDS SAY THE DARNDEST THINGS... TO COMPUTERS

ART LINKLETTER SAYS THE DARNDEST THINGS

From radio to TV to computers, Art Linkletter has always had a way with both young people and the electronic media. The folks at Home Computer Software Inc. may well have been among the many kids who grew up with the celebrated host and author, because they were the ones to snag the rights to Linkletter's perennial best-seller, *Kids Say the Darndest Things*. The interactive book/computer program got Link's wholehearted support—along with that of the tough panel of critics we see here—at the company's Sunnyvale, California, headquarters.

ATARI®
leader mondiale nei videogiochi

COMPUTER GAMES, ITALIAN STYLE

Video Giochi? Is that an electronic version of those delicious Italian dumplings? No, that's gnocchi. So what have we here?

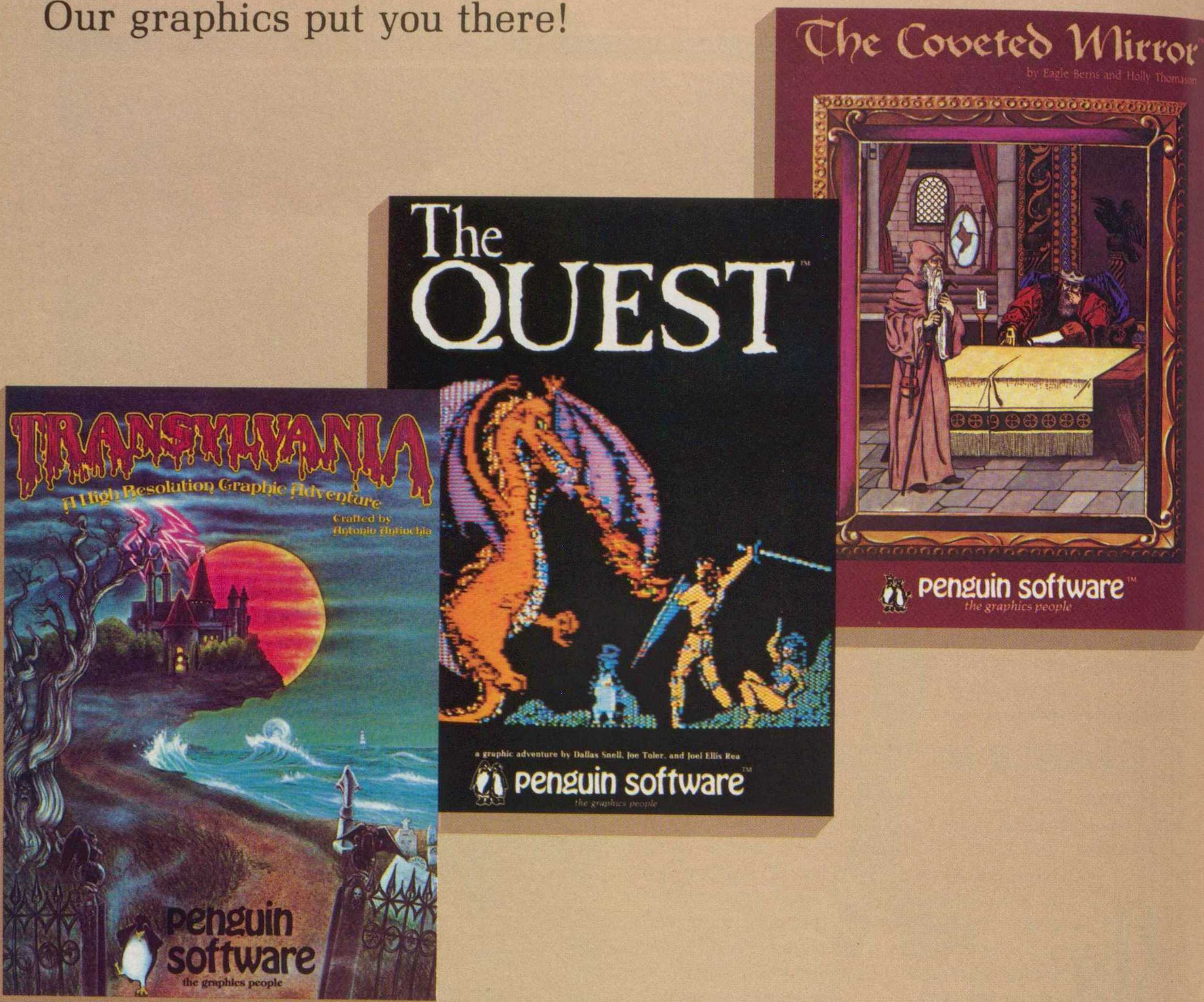
The universal appeal of computer games, that's what. *Video Giochi* is a slick, colorful game magazine published in Milan, Italy. *Giochi* is Italian for "games," by the way.

How popular are computer games in Italy? In the urban north, at least, very. (They still play foosball in the south.) Games in generic cabinets go for 100 lire—the equivalent of $7^{1}/_{2}$ cents in American money! Even with the Italian economy on a downswing, that's not bad.

Video Giochi, however, sells for 3,000 lire, or about two bucks, so it's definitely cheaper to play *giochi* than to read about them.

ADVENTURE

Our graphics put you there!


The Coveted Mirror
by Eagle Berns and Holly Thomason
penguin software™
the graphics people
The QUEST™
a graphic adventure by Dallas Snell, Joe Toler, and Joel Ellis Rea
penguin software™
the graphics people
TRANSYLVANIA
A High Resolution Graphic Adventure
Crafted by
Antonio Antiochia
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Thoughtful prose and stunningly detailed graphics by some of the best computer artists bring life to the Penguin Software adventure series. Whether in the beautiful detail of Transylvania, the expanse of The Quest, or the animation throughout The Coveted Mirror, our graphics make you feel like you're there, experiencing the adventure as you play.

The Penguin adventures are or will be available on disk for the Apple II series, Atari home computers, Commodore 64, IBM PC, and Apple Macintosh.
Double - sided 5¼" disks are $34.95, and Macintosh disks are $39.95.
Graphics created with The Graphics Magician.

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COMPUTER GAMES MAGAZINE

GOLDEN

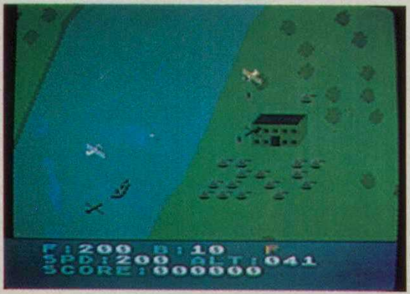
FLOPPY

AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE

Movies have their Oscars and music has its Grammy Awards. Computer games are as much an art form as any other field of entertainment, and certainly deserve awards of their own. We are not ones to blindly proclaim that all computer, arcade and home video games are excellent. Some are awful! It is the rare game that combines graphics, playability and fun to capture the hearts of the players. The following games meet these criteria, and we are happy to award them Computer Games Magazine's "Golden Floppy" Award for excellence. Congratulations!

COMPUTER GAMES MAGAZINE
GOLDEN
1984
FLOPPY
AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE

COMPUTER GAMES



GAME OF THE YEAR
BLUE MAX
(Synapse)
HONORABLE MENTION: PLANETFALL, JUMPMAN, POLE POSITION, DIMENSION X

SHOOT-'EM-UP OF THE YEAR
BLUE MAX
(Synapse)
HONORABLE MENTION: ZAXXON, ASTRO CHASE, STAR TREK

BEST GRAPHICS OF THE YEAR
POLE POSITION
(Atari)
HONORABLE MENTION: BEACH-HEAD, QUEST FOR TIRES, DIMENSION X

BEST MUSIC OF THE YEAR
RESCUE SQUAD
(Muse)
HONORABLE MENTION: MULE, MONSTER SMASH, DRAGONRIDERS OF PERN, ARCHON, SPY'S DEMISE, NECROMANCER, DIMENSION X

BEST ALL-TEXT ADVENTURE OF THE YEAR
PLANETFALL
(Infocom)
HONORABLE MENTION: ENCHANTER, SUSPENDED

BEST GRAPHIC ADVENTURE OF THE YEAR
THE QUEST
(Penguin)
HONORABLE MENTION: MASK OF THE SUN, THE DARK CRYSTAL, GRUDS IN SPACE

STRATEGY GAME OF THE YEAR
SARGON III
(Hayden)
HONORABLE MENTION: ARCHON, KNIGHTS OF THE DESERT

SPORTS GAME OF THE YEAR
STAR LEAGUE BASEBALL
(Gamestar)
HONORABLE MENTION: ONE ON ONE, PITSTOP, POLE POSITION, MAJOR LEAGUE HOCKEY, ATARI FOOTBALL

MAZE GAME OF THE YEAR
OIL'S WELL
(Sierra On-Line)
HONORABLE MENTION: MS. PAC-MAN, DIAMOND MINE, RESCUE SQUAD, JUICE

CLIMBING GAME OF THE YEAR
JUMPMAN
(Epyx)
HONORABLE MENTION: HARD HAT MACK, ZOMBIES, LODE RUNNER, THE HEIST

ARCADE TRANSLATION OF THE YEAR
FROGGER
(Parker)
HONORABLE MENTION: POLE POSITION, ZAXXON

FANTASY/ROLE-PLAYING GAME OF THE YEAR
ULTIMA III
(Origin)
HONORABLE MENTION: TELENGARD, GATEWAY TO APSHAI, LEGACY OF LLYLGAMYN

BEST ANIMATION OF THE YEAR
POGO JOE
(Screenplay)
HONORABLE MENTION: QUEST FOR TIRES, POPEYE, DROL, BRISTLES, BEACH-HEAD

MOST INNOVATIVE GAME OF THE YEAR
PINBALL CONSTRUCTION SET
(Electronic Arts)
HONORABLE MENTION: THE ARCADE MACHINE, LIFESPAN, DRELBS, CRUSH CRUMBLE AND CHOMP, FLIP 'N' FLOP, PRISONER 2

BEST EDUCATIONAL GAME OF THE YEAR
TYPE ATTACK
(Sirius)
HONORABLE MENTION: WORDRACE, INTELLECTUAL DECATHLON

FUNNIEST GAME OF THE YEAR
SPARE CHANGE
(Broderbund)
*HONORABLE MENTION: QUEST FOR TIRES, DROL, Q*BERT*

WEIRDEST GAME OF THE YEAR
MOONDUST
(Creative)
HONORABLE MENTION: WORMS, DROL

SICKEST GAME OF THE YEAR
THE BILESTOAD
(Datamost)
HONORABLE MENTION: EPIDEMIC, SAVE NEW YORK

STUPIDEST GAME OF THE YEAR
TRIAD
(Adventure International)
DISHONORABLE MENTION: POOYAN, TRASHMAN

COMPUTER GAMES MAGAZINE
GOLDEN
1984
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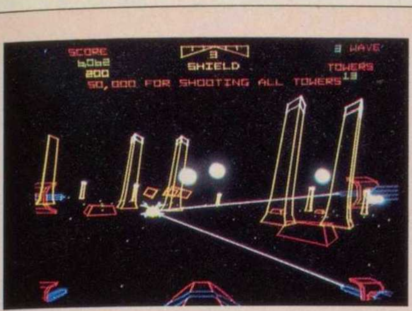
ARCADE GAMES



GAME OF THE YEAR
STAR WARS
(Atari)
HONORABLE MENTION: DRAGON'S LAIR, SPACE ACE, MACH 3

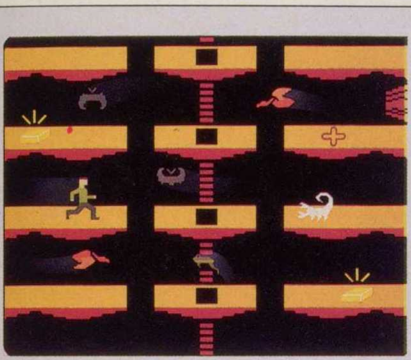
SHOOT-'EM-UP OF THE YEAR
STAR WARS
(Atari)
HONORABLE MENTION: XEVIOUS, TIME PILOT, MACH III

MOST CHALLENGING GAME OF THE YEAR
DISCS OF TRON
(Bally/Midway)
HONORABLE MENTION: DRAGON'S LAIR, DISCS OF TRON, SKY RIDER, FIREFOX

BEST GRAPHICS OF THE YEAR
SPACE ACE
(Cinematronics)
HONORABLE MENTION: DRAGON'S LAIR, TRACK & FIELD, DISCS OF TRON, POLE POSITION 2

MOST INNOVATIVE GAME OF THE YEAR
DRAGON'S LAIR
(Cinematronics)
HONORABLE MENTION: SKY RIDER, CRYSTAL CASTLES, SINISTAR

VIDEO GAMES



GAME OF THE YEAR
PITFALL II
(Activision)
HONORABLE MENTION: SPACE SHUTTLE, LONDON BLITZ, WAR ROOM, TRUCKIN', DRACULA

SHOOT-'EM-UP OF THE YEAR
ASTRO CHASE
(Parker)
HONORABLE MENTION: ROBOT TANK, CENTIPEDE, GALAXIAN

BEST SOUND OF THE YEAR
SEWER SAM
(Interphase)
HONORABLE MENTION: DOLPHIN, STRAWBERRY SHORTCAKE, SQUISH 'EM, BASEBALL **(Atari)**

BEST GRAPHICS OF THE YEAR
ASTRO CHASE
(Parker)
HONORABLE MENTION: FATHOM, NOVA BLAST

BEST SPORTS GAME OF THE YEAR
BASEBALL
(Atari, 5200 version)
HONORABLE MENTION: ROCKY, SUPER ACTION BASEBALL

EDUCATIONAL GAME OF THE YEAR
KID VID
(Coleco)
HONORABLE MENTION: ATARI SESAME STREET GAMES

MOST INNOVATIVE GAME OF THE YEAR
WAR ROOM
(Probe 2000)
HONORABLE MENTION: SPACE SHUTTLE, CAMPAIGN '84, GUST BUSTER, SAFE CRACKER

MAZE GAME OF THE YEAR
ESCAPE FROM THE MINDMASTER
(Starpath)
HONORABLE MENTION: MS. PAC-MAN, TUNNEL RUNNER

CLIMBING GAME OF THE YEAR
MINER 2049ER
(Micro Fun)
HONORABLE MENTION: DONKEY KONG JR., SQUISH 'EM

ARCADE CONVERSION OF THE YEAR
FROGGER
(Parker)
*HONORABLE MENTION: BURGERTIME, STAR TREK, MS. PAC-MAN, Q*BERT*

MOST CHALLENGING GAME OF THE YEAR
SPACE SHUTTLE
(Activision)
HONORABLE MENTION: TRUCKIN', ASTRO CHASE

FUNNIEST GAME OF THE YEAR
QUEST FOR TIRES
(Sierra On-Line)
*HONORABLE MENTION: PRIVATE EYE, Q*BERT*

STUPIDEST GAME OF THE YEAR
Z-TACK
(Bomb)
DISHONORABLE MENTION: ARTILLERY DUEL, CRACKPOTS, REVENGE OF THE BEEFSTEAK TOMATOES

COMPUTER GAMES MAGAZINE
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1984
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2001: A ZORK ODYSSEY? VIDEO DISCS? HOLOGRAPHY? MORE DRAGONS?

THE FUTURE OF ADVENTURE GAMES

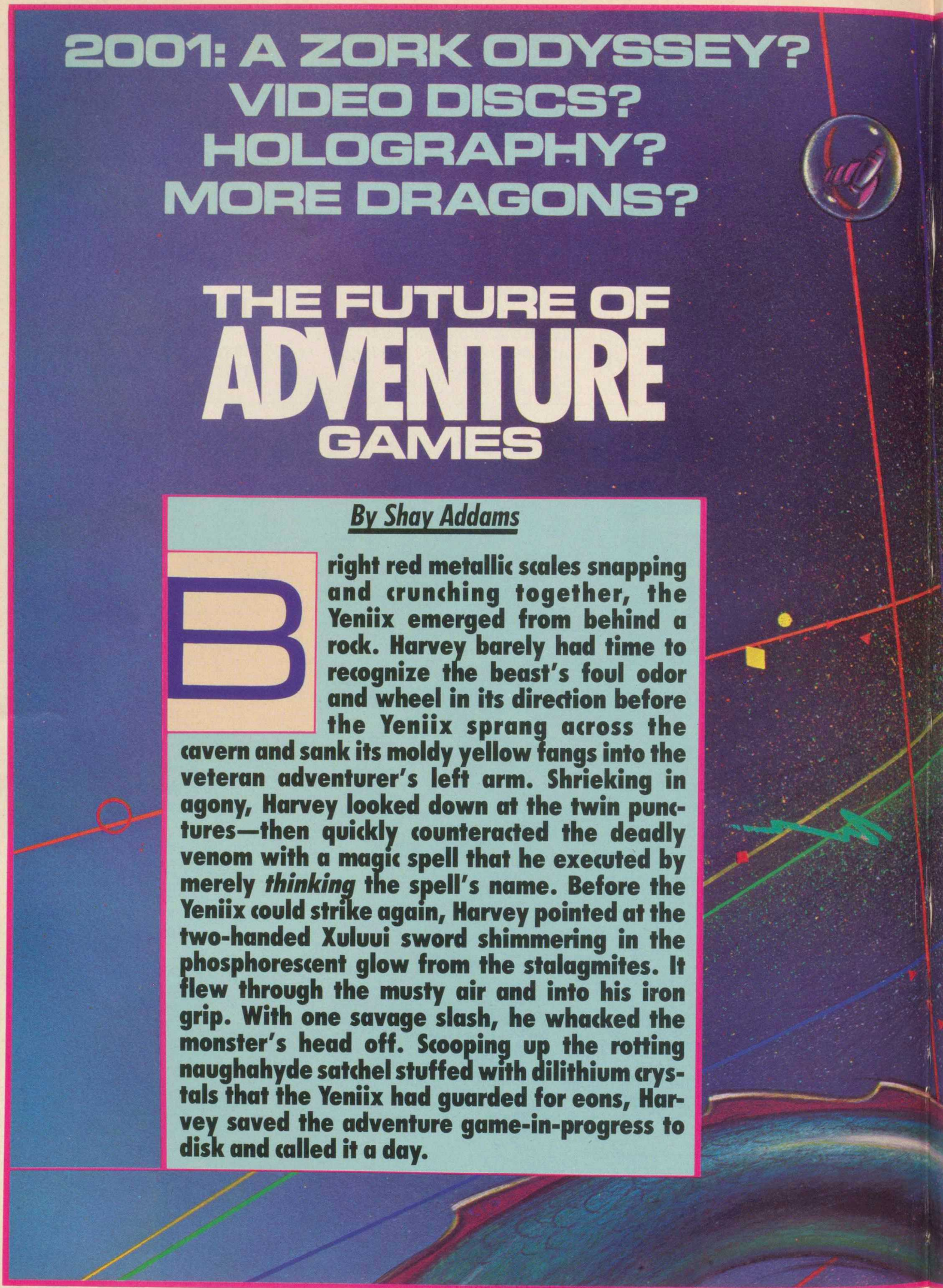


ILLUSTRATION BY AKIO MATSUYOSHI

By Shay Addams

Bright red metallic scales snapping and crunching together, the Yeniix emerged from behind a rock. Harvey barely had time to recognize the beast's foul odor and wheel in its direction before the Yeniix sprang across the cavern and sank its moldy yellow fangs into the veteran adventurer's left arm. Shrieking in agony, Harvey looked down at the twin punctures—then quickly counteracted the deadly venom with a magic spell that he executed by merely *thinking* the spell's name. Before the Yeniix could strike again, Harvey pointed at the two-handed Xuluui sword shimmering in the phosphorescent glow from the stalagmites. It flew through the musty air and into his iron grip. With one savage slash, he whacked the monster's head off. Scooping up the rotting naughahyde satchel stuffed with dilithium crystals that the Yeniix had guarded for eons, Harvey saved the adventure game-in-progress to disk and called it a day.

Most programmers and game designers agree that incredible technological innovations such as lasers and holography will someday enable gamers to see, touch, smell and hear the inhabitants and trappings of a game's setting, and to enter commands without typing them in on a keyboard. But how do we get there from here, and what can we look forward to in the meantime? Major advances depend on increased RAM and greater disk space. It requires a basic knowledge of the structure of contemporary adventures to understand why these developments are so crucial.

Classic adventures like *Zork* consist of three parts: data files, a logic routine and the all-important parser. The data files contain descriptions (text or pictures) of every location, object, person, creature and possible effect of your interactions with them in the course of a game. Sophisticated adventures rely on vast databases, which have to be stored on disk. When you "walk north," for example, the program accesses the disk for the data it needs to illustrate or describe the room you just entered, then hauls that information into the computer's RAM. Without this technique (called "overlaying the disk" by applications programmers who employ it in spreadsheets, word processors and other business applications), an adventure would be limited to the computer's available RAM. The effects of your keyed-in commands are determined by the logic portion of the program, which keeps track of your current location, inventory, what's already happened in the game, and the various possibilities.

An adventure's most vital element is the parser. This subroutine receives your keyed-in command and interprets it before passing it on to the logic department. The archetypal parsers, which date back to William Crowther's mainframe adventure, *Colossal Caverns* of the mid-Seventies, accept only two words, a verb and noun. A primitive parser like this severely limits the ways in which a player can approach a situation, and is now seen only in graphic adventures and a few of the all-text variety. Parsers that can deal with full sentences containing adjectives and other parts of speech allow players much more creativity and flexibility in approaching situations and dealing with events in a game. (When it comes to a smart parser, no one can touch Infocom's, which understands a vocabulary of 600 to 1000 words. That's why Marc Blank and Infocom have become synonymous with the phrase "all-text adventure.")

> **"Soon we'll be able to live the adventure. All your senses will be stimulated. You'll be able to walk through the screen."**

Worlds Inside the Computer

"An adventure game is like a world inside the computer, with various places and things in it," according to Penguin Software's president Mark Pelczarski (who programmed *The Graphics Magician* and a number of games). "The more memory you have, the more you can depict in that world, so the biggest factor is the amount of RAM and disk space you have to work with." (For the past few years, 48K was the standard maximum RAM, while 64K is more common today. But 128K is fast becoming the new standard, and within five years 512K or even a full megabyte will be the norm.) "With extra memory, authors can incorporate greater numbers of more detailed pictures, better parsers, more elaborate and interactive text, and animation, selecting which elements to focus on and build up in their own games," says Pelczarski. Expanded memory has already led to greater resolution in Penguin adventures, which offer double hi-res mode versions featuring 512×192 graphics for Apple owners with an extended 80-column card that gives them 128K.

"Pictures take up a lot of memory and disk space, which doesn't leave room for as intelligent a parser. (Penguin's adventures, though, do possess some of the best parsers in the graphic category.) We're now setting up a full-scale parser that'll handle anything you throw at it. It will be for 128K computers, like the Mac, PC and jr, and the expanded Apple. Our new parser's part of four or five new games that we'll definitely have out within the next year."

All-Text Vs. Graphics

Will graphic or all-text adventures prevail over the next few years? Pelczarski predicts we'll see a lot more graphic adventures, and Michael Berlyn, who has authored hits such as *Suspended* and *Infidel,* says Infocom will continue its current all-text games. He also hints mysteriously that "we're working on new things," yet remained as tightlipped as the CIA when asked to comment on Infocom's ongoing projects. Don't be surprised to see some mindbending breakthroughs in graphic games.

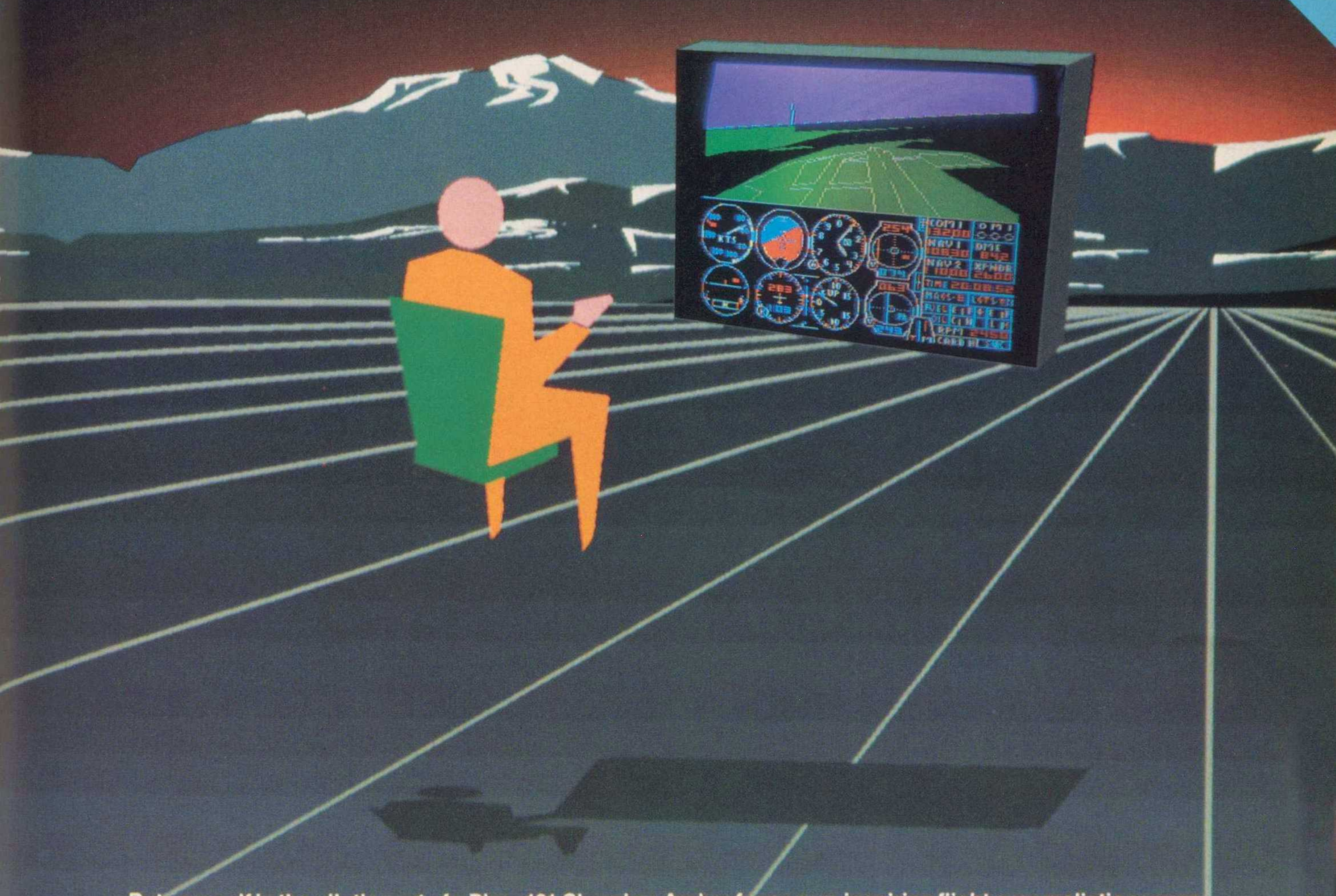
But Berlyn doesn't think all-text and graphic adventures are even the same *type* of game, and therefore finds the question itself inappropriate. "All-text adventures are like reading a book in which you have the opportunity to change things," according to Berlyn. "Graphic games are more like watching a movie or reading a comic book. They're not really the same kind of game, and the divergence between the two will become more obvious as better and better graphics and more memory become available—they may become like adventure movies. As programming becomes more complex and simulations of reality become more realistic, all-text games will become more like books than puzzles. You'll have more room to develop characters, thanks to expanded memory and greater disk space."

The first nationally known author of conventional fiction to cross over to writing interactive fiction in the form of all-text adventures, Berlyn knows what it takes to create adventures that more closely resemble novels than elaborate puzzles. A number of other software houses, recognizing the growing popularity of adventures and the concurrent decline in that of arcade-type games, are transforming existing novels into adventure games. Epyx has already released *Dragonriders of Pern* (based on the science fiction series of Anne McCaffrey), and will follow it with sequels, as well as an adventure adaptation of Isaac Asimov's *Robots of Dawn.* Epyx president Michael Katz says they haven't yet decided whether *Robots* will be an all-text game or some other variety of adventure, perhaps mixing in a hi-res action sequence as *Pern* does. (But there's no truth to the rumor that it will be a ladder game in which the goal is to climb up Isaac Asimov's sideburns.) Penguin plans to bring in established novelists, too. As Pelczarski says, "It takes a definite skill

CONTINUED ON PAGE 38

For Apple, Atari, & Commodore 64™

Flight Simulator II



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THE HOTLINE

...NEW YORK...LONDON...PARIS...SANTA CLARA...

It looks like INTERCHANGABLE cartridges are about to enter the ARCADES. FIRST STAR SOFTWARE has inked a deal with EXIDY (Mousetrap, Fax) to provide four of their home computer games--BOULDER DASH, Flip & Flop, Astro Chase, and Bristles--for Exidy's new convertible system. This system will allow an arcade operator to switch games in just TWO minutes. The First Star games are the FIRST home games to be converted to arcade games in America. NINTENDO (Donkey Kong, etc.) is also introducing an interchangable arcade system. The first two games will be TENNIS and BASEBALL. SENTE, which was the first company to introduce the cartridge idea to arcades, has just been SOLD to BALLY (Pac-Man, etc.) for $3.9 million...

COMMODORE, which has always made software just for Commodore computers, will be going the ATARISOFT route. Expect to see Commodore games in the near future for APPLE, IBM, and ATARI computers. One of these is sure to be JACK ATTACK, a title based on former Commodore president JACK TRAMIEL's much-feared employee review sessions...

LUCASFILMS, who thrilled us with STAR WARS, EMPIRE, JEDI, and RAIDERS, has entered the computer games business! BALL BLAZER, their first release (through Atari), is one of the most incredible game experiences we have ever had. It's sort of like PONG--a million years from now. Check out our next issue for the full story...SIR-TECH's Legacy of Llylgamyn is the first adventure game with WINDOWS...CBS is making great software, but no more games. Guess we'll never see "Tom Swift and his Amazing Ram-Plus Chip"...

Agreements: MICROLAB has licensed FIRST STAR's Boulder Dash and will be making Apple and ColecoVision/Adam versions of the game. PARKER BROTHERS and MYLSTAR (Q*Bert) are teaming up for the next three years, so you can expect just about every Mylstar arcade game to eventually become a Parker home game. Wonder if that includes M.A.C.H. 3...Parker has also picked up the home rights to UNIVERSAL's Mr. Do's Castle...HES has licensed SUPER ZAXXON from SEGA and will release a disk version of the game for the Commodore 64. HES has also signed LEONARD (Mr. Spock) NIMOY as its corporate spokesperson. Nimoy was the director of STAR TREK III: The Search For Spock, which also makes him the director of the LASER game made from the movie...

Surprise, the Apple IIe has a double hi-res mode--560 X 192 with 15 colors instead of six. You'll need an extended 80-column card. All PENGUIN graphics adventures are being converted for this...Soon to come--BEYOND CASTLE WOLFENSTEIN, a sequel to the classic game. This one will show ADOLPH HITLER on the cover. The object of the game is to track him down...Special Golden Floppy Award goes to INFOCOM for being the only company to make adventure games without the word "Quest" in the title. They are now converting their all-text games for even more computers--the ADAM and the OSBORNE. Adam Osborne should be very happy...Addison-Wesley to release the first computer games for GIRLS. The first titles will be Jenny of the Prairie, Chelsea of the South Sea Islands, Lauren of the 25th Century, and CAVE GIRL CLAIR...

For those of you who called The Hotline and guessed the names of the games based on their music--YOU WERE ALL WRONG. The correct answers were: Mountain King, E.T. Phone Home, Astro Chase, Computer War, Dig Dug, Venture, Rat Hotel, Gold Fever, Jedi Arena, Blueprint, Dolphin, Attack of the Beefsteak Tomatoes, Jumpman Jr., Frogger, and Castle Hassle. Sorry, nobody wins the Amdek color monitor...

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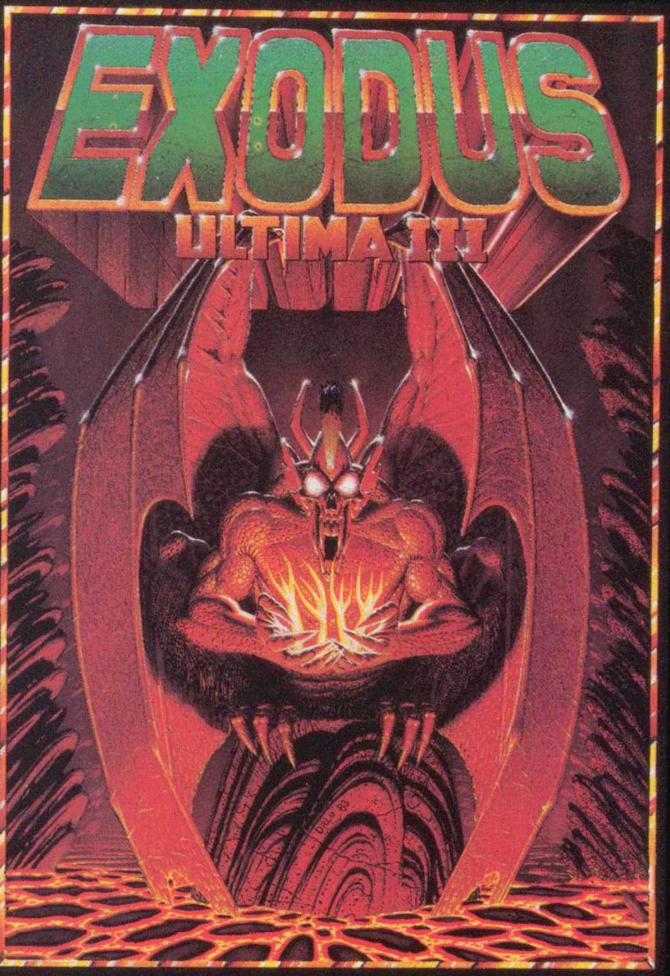

"The world of Ultima III can only be compared to a living tapestry — complex and beautiful . . . This is the best fantasy game in computing. Indeed, it is one of the best fantasy worlds in which to live. Lord British is a veritable JRR Tolkien of the keyboard." — Popular Mechanics

"Exodus: Ultima III, with a superior plot to match its superior gaming system, is a great game. It upgrades the market; in several ways it sets new standards for fantasy gaming state of the art." — Softline

"Exodus: Ultima III is Lord British's magnum opus — so far. It's fun and exciting to play and constantly intriguing. And the ending is marvelously unexpected and not a bit disappointing — except that it is the ending, and as with a good book, you'll probably wish there were more." — Softalk

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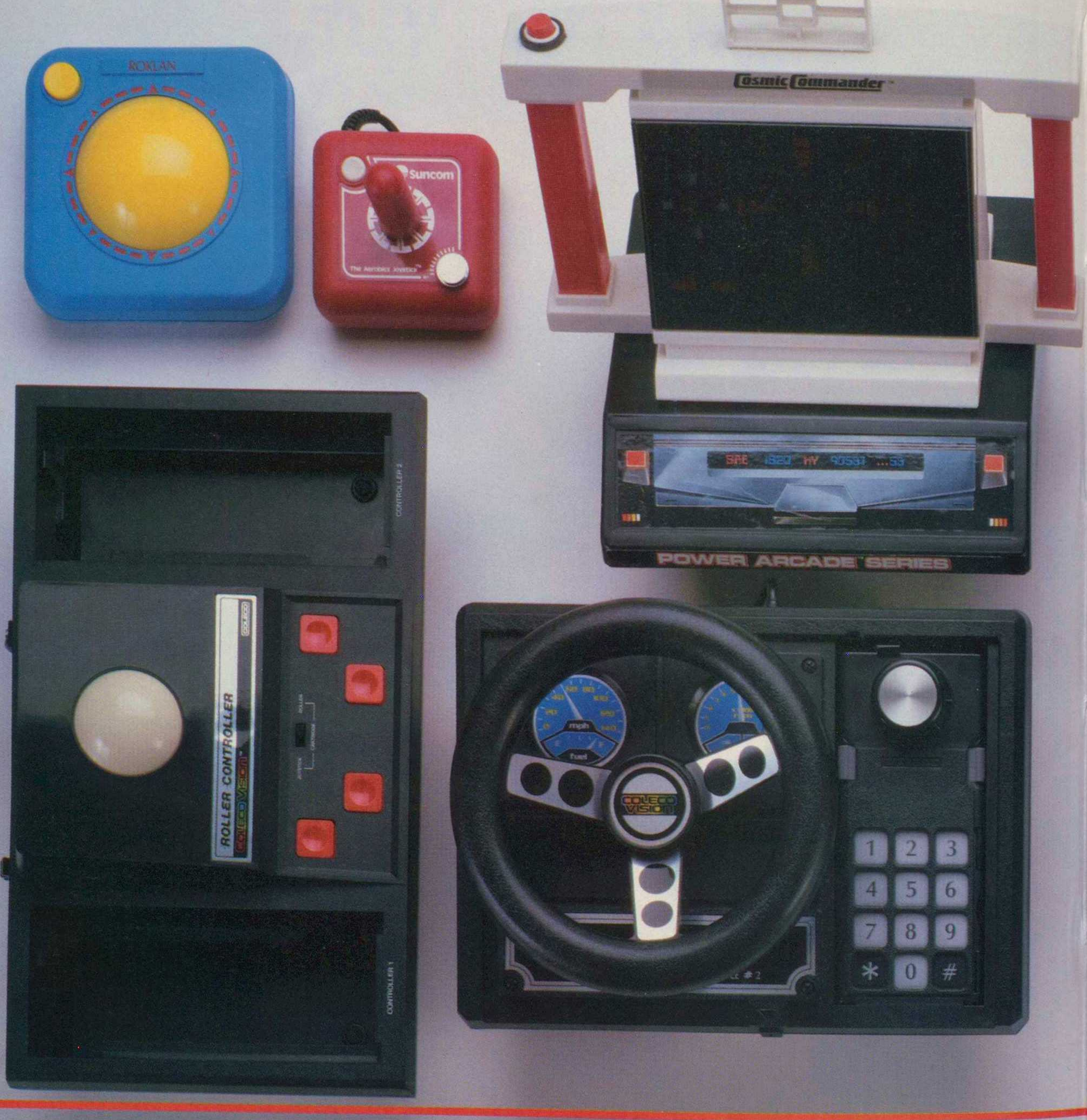
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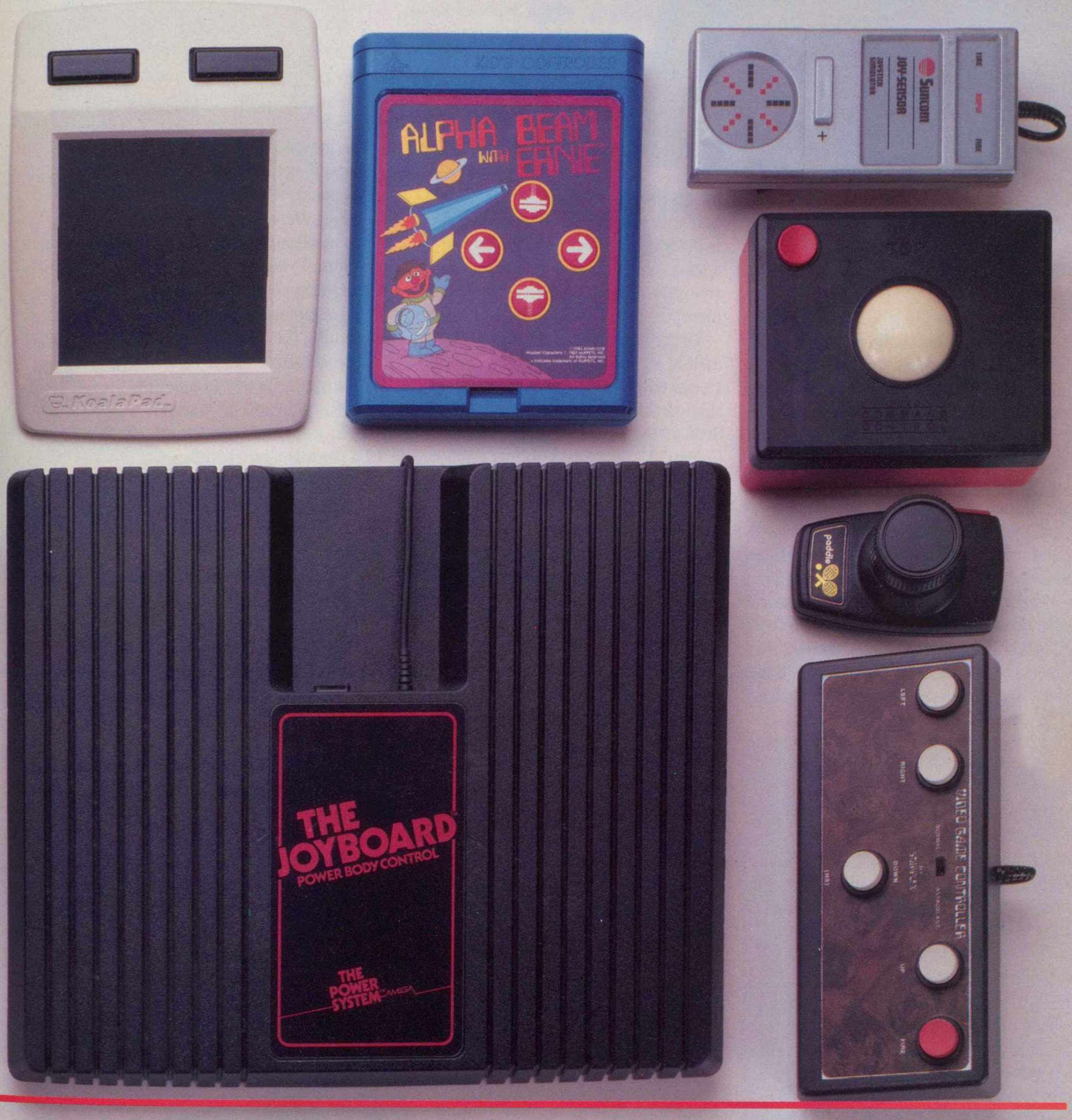
EVERYTHING BUT JOYSTICKS

By Lloyd Davies

A comprehensive collection of off-the-wall controllers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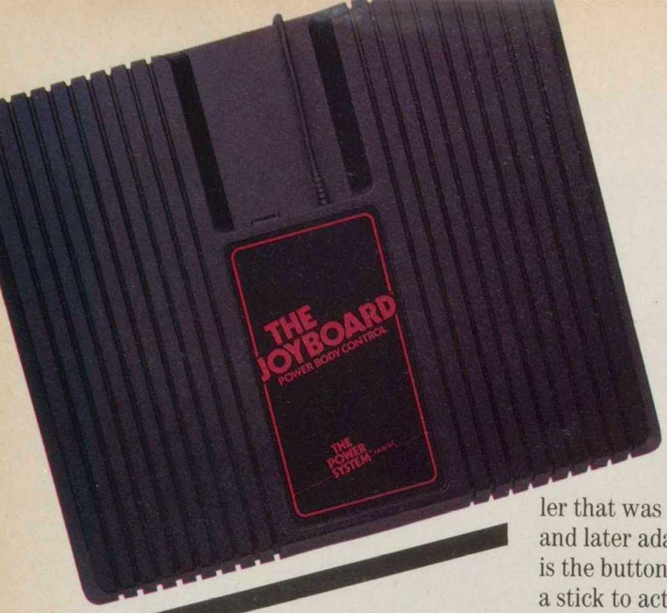
AMIGA
LEFT
RIGHT
DOWN
UP
FIRE
VIDEO GAME CONTROLLER

Sports and movies can trigger plenty of excitement—but no matter how loud you yell, you can't prevent your favorite quarterback from getting sacked, and nothing you can do will save the heroine's life if the film script calls for her to be eaten by a great white shark.

Computer games, on the other hand, give the player an opportunity to control the action and outcome of a game by communicating instructions to the computer or game system. Although joysticks remain the most widely used input device for game playing, many new and unusual types of controllers have been introduced which, in some cases, offer more flexibility, and faster, more precise control over on-screen objects.

Of all the "stickless" controllers, the trackball is the most popular. The advantages of trackball control are many. First, you're not limited to eight or even sixteen directions. Trackballs allow you a full 360 degrees.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY BRUCE FIELDS



Also, because trackballs work optically (special integrated circuits read the frequency of flashes of light through two spoked, rotating disks), they let you zip your laser cannon around the playfield faster than a greased photon torpedo. This makes trackballs perfect for games like *Missile Command, Threshold, Centipede* or any game that requires rapid movement over large areas of the screen.

Whether you own an Atari VCS, an IBM PC or anything in between, there's a trackball for you. VCS fans have several to choose from, all in the $35 to $50 range. These are available from TG Products, Wico and Atari, and are all vast improvements over the grapefruit-sized monster you may remember from the early *NFL Football* coin-op.

CLUE #2: MERESCU, THE BEARDED ORACLE OF YONKERS

Owners of ColecoVision and Atari 5200 can get trackballs specifically designed for their systems. Coleco's **Roller Controller** comes packed with a home version of *Slither.* Atari's **Trak-Ball Controller** for the 5200 doesn't include a game cartridge, but does feature dual keypads and fire buttons. Both units retail for around $70.

IBM and Apple users can also get in on the fun with trackballs from Wico and TG Products. While both units are well-built and feature two independent fire buttons, TG's is the better buy. At $65, it is $20 less than the Wico model.

Also available for Apple and IBM are the **Wico Command Control Mouses** (Mice?). These upside-down trackballs are operated by rolling them around on a desk-top, or some other smooth surface. Although originally designed to provide a quick and easy way to move cursors around for additions, deletions and the repositioning of text, the mouse can also be used as a game controller. At $100 for the IBM and $190 for the Apple II model, though, you may want to stick with the trackball for games.

Besides, who wants to replace their desk-top every two months, just so they can play *Centipede* at work?

BUTTON UP

A second type of controller that was first developed for coin-ops and later adapted for home game systems is the button console. Rather than using a stick to activate the four directional switches, the button console incorporates individual push-buttons.

Button consoles are fantastic for adding arcade flavor to *Asteroids* and games with virtually identical gameplay such as Starpath's *Suicide Mission*, Sega's *Star Trek* and *Space Fury* by Coleco.

If you own an Atari VCS, ColecoVision, Commodore 64 or VIC-20, there are several button consoles to choose from. They are the **Questar I Button Console** from Questar, the **Video Game Controller** by Starplex, and the **Fingertip Controller** from KY Enterprises. The Questar model is the most expensive ($35 compared to $30 for the Starplex, and $20 for the Fingertip Controller), but it's designed exactly like its arcade cousin. The Starplex unit includes rapid-fire, but if this feature isn't important to you and you don't mind having all four directional buttons in a small cluster, then go with the Fingertip Controller. Atari is also marketing a push-button controller for the VCS, but this one's designed for the kiddies.

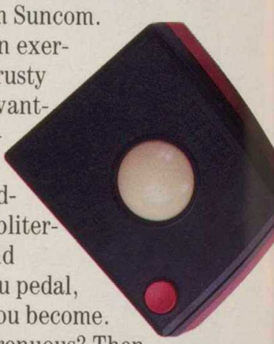
Finally, computer owners have a built-in button console in the form of the computer's typewriter-style keyboard. Often, when playing games like *Omega Race,* the keys A and D are used for "Rotate Left" and "Rotate Right." L fires the ship's weapons, and the semicolon controls the ship's thrust.

GETTING PHYSICAL

Still not convinced to give up that old joystick? Maybe you'd enjoy a controller that adds a touch of realism. For $40 you can ski the slopes in style, or hang ten with Amiga's **Joyboard** and your ColecoVision or Atari VCS. The Joyboard is the first in what may become gaming's fastest-growing spin-off industry—floor-mat controllers! Just place this baby on the floor and jump on it (I've been doing this with all types of controllers for a long time). Shift your weight to the left, and the on-screen skier banks left. Lean to the right, and the little Mogul Maniac slams into a tree. Great fun!

Or perhaps you feel most at home behind the wheel. If so, there's only once choice—Coleco's **Driving Module.** The module costs $60 and comes with *Turbo* (Sega's arcade classic) and a small gas pedal. Although other driving carts such as *Demolition Derby* were promised, none have been released.

For all you healthy, athletic types who feel guilty about sitting around playing video games when you should be out winning the Tour de France, there is the **Aerobic Joystick** from Suncom. Now, with the aid of an exercise bicycle and your trusty VCS, you can shed unwanted pounds while pedalling along *Pole Position*'s Mount Fuji Speedway, or while simply obliterating Mutants, Pods and Landers. The faster you pedal, the more destructive you become.



Sounds a little too strenuous? Then how about Milton Bradley's **Flight Commander** for the Atari VCS. This machine-gun style controller lets you take off into the wild blue yonder for some authentic dogfighting action. The Flight Commander, along with the game *Spitfire Attack,* retails for $40.

MIND GAMES

With all that jumping, cycling, driving and flying, your body will be in terrific shape. But what about your mind? The following controllers let you unleash your artistic creativity with games that help you learn about music, programming and even spelling.

If you've ever resented having to practice the piano while your friends

ROLLER CONTROLLER

Cosmic Commander
POWER ARCADE SERIES

were out playing ball, here's your chance to get back at the music. Now you can blast those notes right out of the air with Mattel's *Melody Blaster* game and the **Intellivision Music Synthesizer.**

This forty-nine key piano keyboard lets you learn your way around the scale while playing a *Space Invaders*-type video game. To shoot the notes as they plummet downward, you have to play the corresponding note on the keyboard. If Chopin had one of these as a kid, he might have made the Top 40. The price of fame? $100.

One of the most exciting products to be introduced for home computerists last year was the **Koalapad Touch Tablet** from Koala Technologies. This inexpensive touch tablet lets you control graphics, issue game commands or simply indicate choices to the computer with the touch of a finger.

Some of the games available from Koala for use with the Koalapad include: *Spider Eater*—a fun way to learn the musical scale; *Dancing Bear*—lets you choreograph the dance *and* write the music; and *Spellicopter*—an aerial acrobatics game that teaches spelling. In addition, each Koalapad comes with a KoalaWare graphics program. It is available for Apple, Atari, Commodore and IBM computers, and lists for $125.

As you can see, game controllers have come a long way since the first stickless controllers—the paddles of *Pong.* When games started becoming more complex, controllers were needed that allowed for more than just the linear movement required for *Pong, Breakout* and other paddle games.

> **"Because trackballs work optically, they let you zip your laser cannon around the playfield faster than a greased photon torpedo."**

Today's controllers range from the practical to the whimsical. While we're seeing controllers such as the Joyboard and the Aerobics Joystick, which require more physical involvement and participation from the player, we're also beginning to see controllers that require less. Two of the least strenuous game controllers to operate are Suncom's **Joy-Sensor** and **The Expander Voice Recognition Unit** for Texas Instruments Home Computers.

The Joy-Sensor is a sleek, modern-looking controller for the VCS that uses a heat-sensitive disk to accept directional commands from the player. Unlike the universally despised Intellivision disc, however, this disc remains stationary and requires only a light touch. Likewise, the fire button (bar) is an equally sensitive recessed strip with standard fire at both ends to accommodate both lefties and righties, and rapid-fire in the middle.

Because of the Joy-Sensor's "touchiness" and unique design, most players need a little time to get adjusted to it. Also, the Joy-Sensor may not be the best type of controller for all games. For real arm-breakers like Activision's *Decathlon,* the $35 Joy-Sensor is welcome relief.

TI-99/4A owners can now talk to their computers via Milton Bradley's Voice Recognition Unit. This device lets you give verbal game commands to the computer when used with compatible software. With MB's *Baseball,* for instance, the player can control the throw from the outfield simply by saying the base or player to receive the throw.

In the future we may see controllers that require total body movement, as well as controllers that detect our eye movements or read brain waves. Does this mean the beginning of the end for the joystick? No way! Joysticks are still the best controllers around for many types of games. Just try playing *Ms. Pac-Man* with a trackball.

What these new controllers *do* mean is that we will have a greater variety of control devices to choose from, each with features that suit them—not only to specific types of games, but to our individual tastes as well.

For More Information

Amiga Corp., 3350 Scott Blvd., Blgd #7, Santa Clara, California 95051.
Atari, Inc., Consumer Division, POB 427, Sunnyvale, California 94086.
Coleco Industries, Inc., POB 47, Amsterdam, NY 12010.
Koala Technologies, 4962 El Camino Real, Suite 125, Los Altos, California 94022.
KY Enterprises, 3039 E. Second St., Long Beach, California 90803.
Milton Bradley, 443 Shaker Rd., East Long Meadow, Massachusetts, 01028.
Questar, 670 N.W. Pennsylvania Ave., Chehalis, Washington 98532.
Starplex Electronics, E. 23301, Liberty Lake, Washington 99019.
Suncom, 650 Anthony Trail, Suite E, Northbrook, Illinois 60062.
Wico, 6400 W. Grosspoint Rd., Niles, Illinois 60648.

SWAP SHOP

Do you have some old games or equipment that you're tired of? Do you want to sell them or trade them for something else? The Swap Shop is a free (no catches, no strings attached, no ripoffs) service to our readers.

For Sale. $475. I have a Commodore VIC-20, the Datasette, an 8K memory expander, joystick, and 19 cartridges including—**Raid on Fort Knox, Apple Panic, Sea Wolf, Avenger, Sky is Falling Gorf, Alien, Mole Attack, Omega Race, Trashman** plus 170 games on tape and 8 programming books. Please send money order or certified check to: LeRoy Michelson, 405 4th Ave. S.E., Jamestown, North Dakota.

We have found a practical and inexpensive way to modify the standard Atari 5200 controller and make it self centering. It takes ten minutes and does not require any electronic skills. Please send a self-addressed stamped envelope and $1 to: Brian Pascoe, 906 W. Magnetic St., Marquette, Michigan 49855.

Attention: I sell game cartridges, disks, and cassettes for Atari VCS, 400/800, 5200, ColecoVision/Adam, Intellivision, VIC-20, C-64, Apple, TI 99, TRS-80, and other related systems. I can get any game, at any time, for anyone. New games just off factory lines not yet available in most stores and a lot cheaper, and 70% faster than most mail order companies! For a catalog, send $1 and your name, address, the name of your system to: The Video Gamer's Club, Jason Nakagawa, 95-120A Kipapa Pl., Mililani Town, Hawaii 96789.

Atari 400/800 owners. Get 8 assorted games (4 cassettes, 2 carts, 2 disks) for only $40! Dennis Menoni, 3207 54th Ave., Cicero, Illinois 60650.

Just got a new ColecoVision and I'm looking to buy some cartridges or expansion modules. Let me know what you're looking to give up and I'll make you an offer. Also I'm wanting to sell my **Congo Bongo** cartridge (not out of box) for the Atari VCS for only $20 or trade. Jeff Miller, 205 N. School St. Box 28, Carlock, Illinois 61725.

Wanted: games for Atari 2600: **Room of Doom, Cosmic Swarm, Starmaster, Riddle of the Sphinx, Thunder Ground, Basketball, Airlock, Warplock, Revenge of the Beefsteak Tomatoes, Flash Gordon** and many others. Paul Rivera, P.O. Box 1, St. George Station, Staten Island, New York 10301.

I am looking for some reasonable prices on some games for the Atari computers. Keith Bender, 204 Tom Robinson Rd., Franklin, Tennessee 37064.

I am going to college and would like to sell my ColecoVision, Super Action Controller and 16 cartridges. Titles include: **Rocky, Centipede, Popeye, War Room,** and **Q*Bert.** Will sell to best offer. Dean Schlotterer, 745 Deerfield Rd., Gretna, Louisiana 70053.

Attention VIC-20 users. Deal of the century, over 150 games for sale . . . **Frogger, Donkey Kong** and **Crazy Climber** included. For a catalog send $1. Todd Robinson, 797 Jacksonville Rd., Willow Beach, Ontario, Canada.

Attention VCS owners. I have cartridges for sale—reasonably priced. Send SASE for list or will trade for some ColecoVision carts of equal value. Bev Rogalski, 554 Douglas, Elgin, Illinois 60120.

I have a Commodore VIC-20 for sale for only $60 or best offer. I am also selling **Omega Race** for $10, **Galactic Defender** for $5, and **Introduction to Basic 1** and **2** for $15 each. Send money or check to: Jonathan Lamarca, Post 'n' Rail Ave., Plymouth, MA 02360.

Space Panic for ColecoVision (brand new) $25. A great space adventure game. Samuel Maciel, 2569 Amethyst, Santa Clara, California 95051.

For sale: VIC-20, recorder, **Gorf, Omega Race, Radar Rat Race, Cosmic Cruncher, Amok, Astroblitz,** joystick and Basic programming book. $295. Great deal!! May trade for ColecoVision or Atari 5200. Tommy Webb, 27 6th St. N.W., Pulaski, Virginia 24301.

Bored of your old Atari VCS cartridges? Me too. Willing to make a reasonable trade. Cartridges include **Jungle Hunt, Zaxxon, Q*Bert, Phoenix, Frogger, G.I. Joe, Venture, Adventure, Donkey Kong, Star Raiders, Berzerk, Warlords** and many more. Dave Moadel, 19 Half Mile Common, Westport, CT 06880.

I recently obtained a VIC-20 and three carts. I am looking for the recorder, possibly the disk drive and good adventure programs. If you want to sell VIC-20 hardware or software, please send information and price list to: Rod Colguitt, 5904 Boys Club Ln., Ft. Smith, Arkansas 72901.

Hi! I'd like to sell an Odyssey video game with two joysticks and 4 carts—**Blockout/Breakdown, Freedom Fighter, Armoured Encounter/Sub Chase,** and **CryptoLogic.** For this I'm asking $145 or best offer. If you're interested, let me know. Mark Wiens, P.O. Box 924, Vanderhoof, British Columbia, Canada V0J3A0.

For sale or trade: 19 Atari VCS carts and Wico bat handle for modem, 1010 program recorder, RAM add-ons, or Atari computer carts or cassettes $10 and under. Fred Wofford, 530 Seneca St., Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17110.

For sale—17 assorted Apple games with documentation. All are on disk. Send SASE for list and prices, or first $200 takes all. Brooke Wallace, Box 85, Paradise Valley, Nevada 89426.

For Sale—Atari VCS with new Pointmaster joysticks and 11 games including: **Chopper Command, Stampede, Pac-Man, Maze Craze** and **Atlantis.** $200 or trade for a ColecoVision of equal value. Greg Chan, 9701 Banta Ave., Anaheim, California 92804.

I'm moving to Australia. Must sell five Atari computer cartridges—**Pac-Man, Centipede, Basketball, Picnic Paranoia,** and **Claim Jumper.** All work like new. $15 each or $50 for all five carts! M. Graham, P.O. Box 434, Nevada City, California 95959.

I am looking for a used Atari VCS for a reasonable price. Possibly be interested in non-working VCS also if cheap. Dennis McCall, 9725 E. Harvard V-346, Denver, Colorado 80231.

Message to our readers: The Swap Shop can also be used to meet other game players. If you're interested in having people from all over the country write to you, let the Swap Shop know and we'll print your name and address.

I wish to get rid of my copies of the following Apple computer games. **Thief, Temple of Apshai, Hellfire Warrior, Ultima** (not Ultima II or III which I won't buy), **Suicide, Escape From Rungistan, Snoggle.** In addition, under the aegis of Wilsoft Enterprises, I am offering two game disks I have written myself—**Destroy the Demon** (adventure) and **Tvideola** (arcade) for $15 a disk plus documentation. The store-bought computer games go for $20 a disk. Paul R. Wilson, 19 Sunset Pl., Bergenfield, NJ 07621.

I have some ColecoVision cartridges for sale. **Cosmic Avenger, Mouse Trap, Lady Bug, Front Line, Donkey Kong Jr., Space Fury, Space Panic, Pepper II, Looping, Carnival, Gorf, Mr. Do., Donkey Kong,** and **Subroc.** $20 each. Send SASE to Jay Iwahashi, 2807 Bartlett St., Oakland, California 94602.

I'm looking for some good deals on these VCS games: **Maze Craze, Surround, Flag Capture, Defender,** and **Missile Command.** Anyone selling? Mike Fearing, 883 Kellogg St., Green Bay, Wisconsin 54303.

Since my Commodore 64 was stolen, I have the following software for sale. On cart—**Trashman, Save New York, Heswriter 64, Gridrunner, Retroball.** On cassette—**Crush, Crumble and Chomp, Research Assistant 2.0.** On disk—**Decision Maker, Space Rescue, Fast Eddie.** Also three new, unopened 5200 cartridges—**Defender, Space Invaders, Missile Command.** $15 each. Jas Boyajean, 186 Countryside Ct., Braidwood, Illinois 60408.

I will sell the following Atari VCS games for $11 each—**Fast Eddie, Kaboom, Fishing Derby, Berzerk, Pac-Man, Ms. Pac-Man, Frogger,** and **M Network Baseball.** Send check or money order to Marilyn Gonzalez, 334 W. 17th St., Apt. 2W, New York, NY 10011.

I will give you two ColecoVision cartridges for one Atari 5200 cartridge. Also for sale, TRS-80 cassette recorder with 7 cassettes. Send SASE to Charles Trimblett, 160 Louis St., Secaucus, NJ 07094.

Commodore 64 owners: Willing to trade ColecoVision, VCS for C-64 disk drive or datacassette with cassettes. Or will sell my ColecoVision for $120 or best offer. Write Phillip Ryker, 5323 SW 127 Ct., Mia, Florida 33175.

Want to buy ColecoVision games, all names, up to $15. Frank Goudreau, RFD #1, Box 2370, Greene, ME 04236.

I have two games for the Apple computer for sale or trade—**Cranston Manor** and **Hard Hat Mack.** I would like any of the **Zork** games or **Witness** by Infocom. Chris Dock, 3533 Rum River Dr., Anoka, MN 55303.

Atari 5200 carts for sale (or will trade for top 2600 carts). All like new and hardly played: **Qix, Frogger** ($20), **Centipede, Pac-Man, Gorf, Miner 2049er** ($25 each). Write to J. Blythe, Rt. 5, Box 325, Cleveland, Texas 77327.

Attention Atari computer owners! I am offering to sell or trade many of the great hit programs. On cassette—**Frogger, Pro Bowling, Kingdom, Pushover, Giant Slalom, Astro Chase.** On cartridge—**Pac-Man, Missile Command, E.T. Phone Home, Galaxian, Centipede.** On disk—**Crush, Crumble and Chomp, Apple Panic, David's Midnight Magic.** Contact Jason Rinsky, 23 Winthrop Rd., Short Hills, New Jersey 07078.

For Sale: Intellivision carts—**Football, Baseball, Basketball, Hockey, Bowling, Boxing, Auto Racing, Sea Battle, Mission X, Frogger, Venture, Lady Bug, Donkey Kong** and others. Best offer or will trade for **Turbo, Miner 2049er, War Room,** or the Atari conversion module. Scott Ranke, 350 Inverway, Palatine, Illinois 60067.

New—**Sound Maker** for all Atari computers. Helps put realistic sounds in programs. Makes it easy for the programmer. Includes **Star Raiders** program. Available in 5K cassette only. Send $15 plus $1.50 for postage and handling to Sound Cassette, 3142 Marlborough Ave., San Diego, California 92105.

For Sale—Atari 5200 with cartridges **Super Breakout, Galaxian, Football,** and **Centipede.** $200. Willing to make deals. Jon Meitus, 500 Ridge Rd., Tiburon, California 94920.

I am looking for a VIC 1540 Disk Drive or a datacassette, and modem for Commodore 64. Tony Dutteiv, 709 Lake Dr., Westminister, Maryland 21157.

Selling—**Atlantis, Swords and Serpents, Donkey Kong** for Intellivision $10-15. Selling or trading—**Ms. Pac-Man** for Atari computer, $30 or for **Joust** or **Star League Baseball.** Two weeks old. Write Greg Zerzan, 6364 S.E. McNary Rd., Milwaukie, Oregon 97222.

For sale or swap. Commodore 64 carts **Buck Rogers, Centipede.** Atari VCS carts **Pac-Man, Missile Command,** others. Will trade for C-64 carts or cassettes. Ralph Redman, 1726 Maplewood, Pueblo, Colorado 81005.

Attention all ColecoVision owners! Want to buy my **Smurf, Ladybug,** and **Carnival** cartridges or would you rather trade? I am also interested in buying other cartridges for ColecoVision, especially new ones. Robert Rivera, 10 Hunting St., Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Wanted—Atari 810 or Compatible disk drive for Atari computer. Must be in good condition. Also, am willing to sell two computer games, **Zaxxon** and **Canyon Climber** 16K Cassette. $20 each or best offer. David Bennett, 651 Woodhill Dr., Fairborn Ohio 45324.

For the ColecoVision only! Will trade or sell for $18 each—**Donkey Kong Jr., Space Fury, Venture, Mr. Do.** For—**Popeye, Moonsweeper, Looping, Q*Bert, Pepper II.** Write to: Good Luck Video, 1325 N. Meridian, #108, Wichita Kansas 67203.

A while back you printed in your Hotline that anyone with Star Wars posters that have "Revenge of the Jedi" on them are worth a lot of money. I have one that I would like to sell. If you know of anyone who is interested, give them my address. Also, I can tell you how to play a true 4 player version of **Tennis** on the Atari 5200 using four controllers. Bob Hedual, 2825 Farragut B-105, Butte, Montana 59701.

For Sale—an Atari 400 computer, only $90. It's brand new and one month old. I have an Intellivision **Pitfall** cart for $10 and I have 135 Atari VCS carts. For a list and prices send $1 to David Barclay, P.O. Box 655, Woodsboro, Texas 78393.

I have a problem. I have 13 Atari 2600 carts and I can't sell them! If you would like to buy them or trade them for 5200 carts. I also have 2 joysticks in perfect working order. $8 each cart. $4 each joystick. Write: Michael Strong, 25-19 30th Drive, New York, New York 11102.

For Sale. Atari Swordquest, Earthworld, and Fireworld solutions. I have them!! Atari won't release them!! Send name, address, zip and $5 for each solution ordered. Cash or money order please; specify solution ordered. Special! Order both solutions for $8, and I will enter you as a member of the Atari Club (VCS console orders only). Do it today!! Robycart, 164 N. Blackstone—1453, Fresno, CA 93701.

For Sale—VIC-20. $120 or best offer. Included: Cardette tape recorder interface, and cartridges **Adventureland** and **Omega Race.** Cassettes—**Cycling, Frogger,** and **Centipede.** If interested, write to: James Hannon, 245 East 196th St., Bronx, New York 10458.

I have a ColecoVision and two cartridges, **Donkey Kong Jr.** and **Cosmic Avenger** for sale. ColecoVision by itself is $159 and for one cart is $25. With all of this together the price is $215. One more thing. If anyone wants to buy a Vectrex for $95, write to me: Scott E. Parrish, 9303 Scotmont Dr., Tujunga, California 91042.

For sale! An Atari 400 computer with two cartridges—Basic and **Star Raiders,** to joystick controllers, and Basic instruction books. Gregory Henderson, P.O. Box 9193, Memphis, Tennessee 38109.

For Sale—ColecoVision with cartridges **Donkey Kong, Donkey Kong Jr.,** and **Time Pilot**. Have to sell to buy drums. Adrian Rediker, 20 Black Pt. Road, Scarboro, Maine 04079.

Atari 800 computer (48K) and 810 disk drive and eight arcade games for sale! **Zeppelin, Pharoah's Curse, Caverns of Mars, Baja Buggies, Astro Chase, Tale of Beta Lyrae, Apple Panic.** $600. Seth Gelberg, F.I.T. Box 5014, Melbourne, Florida 32901.

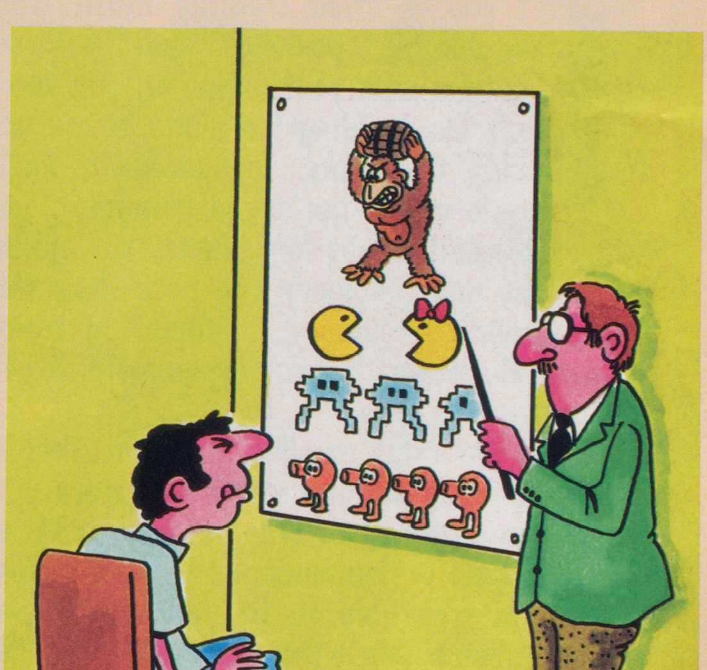
Attention **Dig Dug** lovers! For sale—four **Dig Dug** cartridges for the 2600. Never been used before—Only $20 each! Send check to Stefan Wieland, 46 Yates Ave., Newton, New Jersey 07860.

I have an Atari 410 program recorder to sell. I will also include **States and Capitals** and **An Invitation to Programming Part I.** Nine months old. $60 or best offer. Todd Stanley, 3133 Tonapan Ct., Pleasanton, California 94566.

Wanted: Vectrex cartridges! **Space War, Star Hawk, Hyperchase, Dark Tower.** Also will buy extra controller. Write J.T. O'Neill, 3 Royce Ave., Middletown, New York 10940.

Atari computer owners with disk drives wanted! Any and all Infocom games, **Zork I, II, and III, Deadline, The Witness, Enchanter, Suspended, Planetfall, Infidel.** Also wanted—**Castle Wolfenstein.** Make me a good offer. Will also trade on game for game basis. Also wanted—Atari communicator pack. Write to Scott Caplan, 689 Bloomfield Ave., Clifton, New Jersey 07012.

If you would like to place a free ad in the Swap Shop, send your ad along with your name and address to: Swap Shop, Computer Games, 888 7th Ave., New York, NY 10106. We will print as many ads as fit the page. We accept no responsibility after an ad is published.



How to make your own...

Computer Music

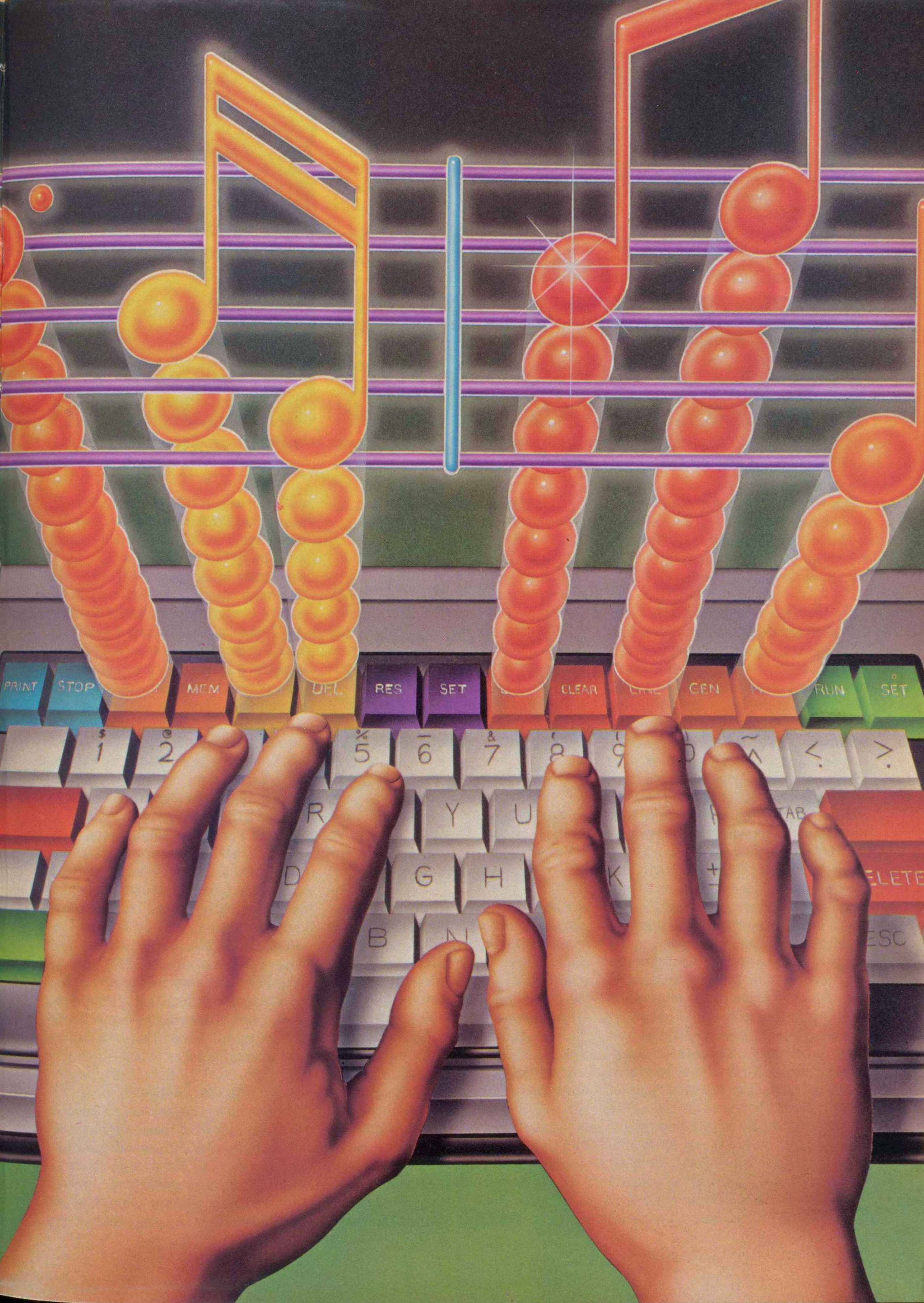
Program it again, Sam

By Bob Guerra

If you've tried creating music from scratch by "peeking" and "poking" around with your computer, you know it's like building the piano before you play *Chopsticks*. To squeeze a single note out of the sound generator, you have to select values for volume, waveform, envelope and frequency and poke them into corresponding memory locations. To create simple three-part harmony requires a degree in computer science.

There are many excellent programs that let you compose, perform and even record your own music with ease. Whether your axe is an Atari, Apple or Commodore 64, there's music software available to fit your needs and budget. Some help in the composition and editing of music. Others turn your computer console into an electronic synethesizer, giving you total control over all parameters of the sound and allowing you to use the keyboard as an instrument for live performance. Still others combine all of these functions.

ILLUSTRATION BY ROBERT BURGER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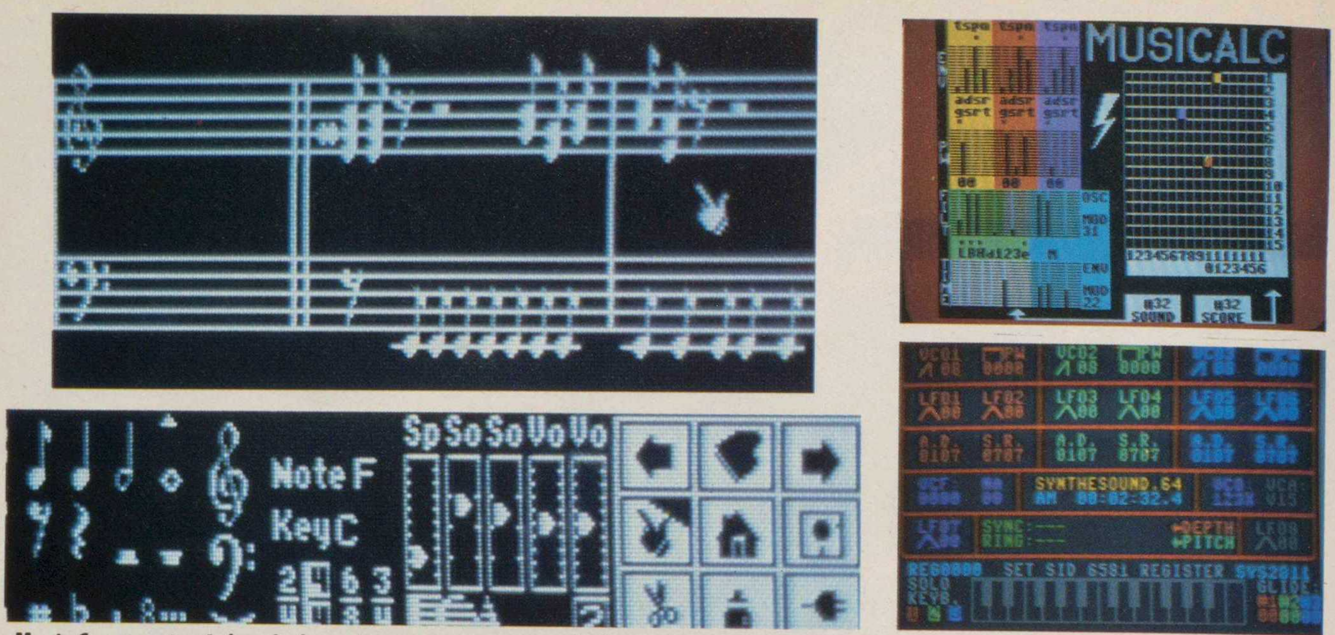


Music Construction*'s hand-shaped cursor comes in handy for dragging notes around; icons show various options.* **MusiCalc** *and* **Synthesound** *turn your C-64 into a synthesizer.*

The following programs will give you an idea of the music software that is available. This is not a complete list, nor are these programs necessarily better than those that haven't been included.

Music Construction Set

Of all the music programs available that allow you to compose, play back and save your music, *MCS* is, perhaps, the easiest to use. The main screen consists of a double staff at the top; a menu of notes, rests, sharps, flats, ties, dots, etc., at the bottom; five slider controls to adjust the sound and tempo of the music; and nine icons to aid in the composition.

By using a joystick or Koalapad to control the "hand" icon, you simply drag notes from the bottom of the screen up to the staffs, and put them in place. Other icons scroll the staffs left and right, cut measures out of one section and paste them into another, and return to the beginning of the composition. When your symphony is complete, just point to the piano icon and press the fire button to hear your creation. Once you're satisfied with the composition, it can be saved by selecting the disk icon.

Although there are many things you *can't* do with *MCS* (change tempo or volume automatically in mid-composition, or set up continually repeating loops of music), you will be able to use it to create beautiful three-part compositions on the C-64 and four-part music on Atari computers. An Apple will only be able to get two simultaneous notes unless you add the Mockingboard by Sweet Micro Systems ($99.95). This handy peripheral gives the Apple six-voice capability.

> **"Musicalc lets you play everything from blues to ancient Hindu, Japanese or Egyptian scales on your C-64."**

If you know more about music than programming, and don't require total control over all aspects of the sound, *MCS* is the logical choice for computer composing.

By Electronic Arts, $40

Musicalc 1

If you've got about a week or two to wade through a confusing 65-page owner's manual, *MusiCalc 1 "Synthesizer and Sequencer"* may be just the program to turn your C-64 into an exciting music machine.

As the name implies, *MusiCalc 1* consists of two main parts. The "synthesizer" lets you use the C-64's function keys to adjust every imaginable parameter of the sound for three independent voices. If there is some strange unheard-of sound tucked away in Commodore's SID chip, this program will let you drag it out.

The "sequencer" portion allows you to create a continuous loop of up to 240 notes. Since micro computer-controlled sequenced loops are used as background for much of today's new wave and rock music, *MusiCalc 1* could be used by professional musicians both onstage and in the studio.

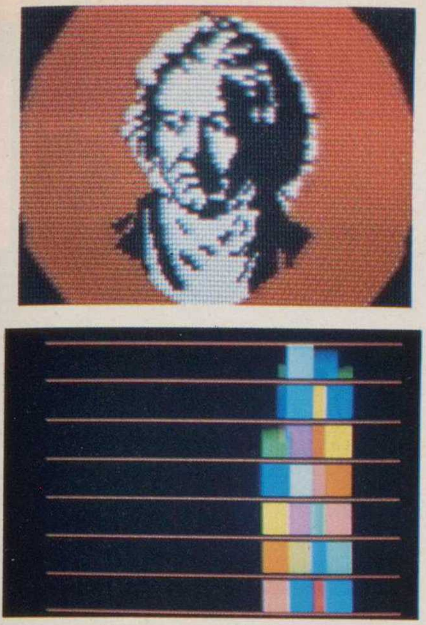
One of the nicest features of *MusiCalc 1* is that once you load in a preset file (of your own creation, or supplied on the program disk), you can immediately access 32 sound settings and 32 scores or sequences just by pressing a couple of buttons. In addition to preset files, the program disk also includes keyboard files that let you play everything from blues scales to ancient Hindu, Japanese or Egyptian scales on your C-64 keyboard.

MusiCalc 1 is one of the most expensive music programs available, but you get a lot of music for your money. It is also possible to use *MusiCalc 1* to interface your C-64 with another C-64 or a thousand-dollar synthesizer. That costs $150.

Waveform, $74.95

Master Composer

This program, also for the Commodore 64, combines some of the best features of *MCS* and *MusiCalc 1.* Like *MCS, Master Composer* lets you compose by entering notes directly onto a musical staff. Rather than standard notes, however, you enter the number of the voice you want—either



Master Composer *will play your tune and print it, too.*

1, 2 or 3.

In the program mode, *Master Composer* gives you complete control of 25 sound chip registers. In addition, the program disk comes with a library of presets for the most common instrument sounds as well as a library of demo songs.

As if this weren't enough, *Master Composer* is tunable, it will produce sheet-music when used with a graphic printer, and compositions are interrupt-driven and easily added to your own programs. Finally, *Master Composer* features a "HELP" key, making it one of the most user-friendly music programs on the market.

Access Software, $39.95

Songwriter

Songwriter wins the award for being the most widely translated music program available. Versions are available for Apple, Atari computers, Commodore 64 and the IBM PC. The problem is, just as the multiple translation is an attempt to reach users of all the major computer systems, the program itself is aimed at too wide an audience. According to the manufacturer, *Songwriter* is designed to guide users "four [years old] through adult from scales and rhythm to more complex musical forms and theory."

What the program does is allow you to compose music by placing square marks (holes) on the screen as if punching holes in a piano roll. When you play your song, the marks scroll by a horizontal row of 12 vertical bars that represent the 12 tones of a one-octave chromatic scale. Somehow, real notes on a staff seem more appropriate as an educational device.

The second main fault is with the documentation. The instruction book is spiral bound (a nice touch), but the question and answer format becomes annoying after the first couple of chapters. Also, there's an "activities" section at the end of each chapter that sounds as if it was written by Mr. Rogers. "Listen to what you have written so far. Which parts do you like? Which parts do you not like? Close your eyes and listen. Ask a friend to listen."

Scarborough, $39.95

Fun With Music

This one won't take four-year-olds from scales to advanced music theory, but what it *will* do is give young people a chance to write simple tunes and use them in a fun musical game. Available on cartridge for the VIC-20 or C-64, *Fun With Music* combines an easy-to-use music editor with an enjoyable one-player game.

In the compose mode you use the number keys to input notes for a single line of music. By pressing "V" you can select four duration values from a whole note to an eighth. The four corresponding rests are also available. As you enter the notes, they appear on a staff at the bottom of the screen. To help keep track of which numbers represent which notes, Epyx has thoughtfully included a cardboard overlay for the keyboard.

When the tune is complete (it can contain 229 notes and rests), you enter the game mode, where your song becomes part of the musical chase game. You maneuver a drum major to catch the notes of your song as they cross the screen. Just to make things interesting, there is a hungry dog after the major's legs.

Fun With Music won't prepare kids for Julliard, but it's a painless way to introduce them to music and let them have some fun while they're learning.

Epyx, $39

When I'm 64

From the title, you might think that this program is either a financial planning package for retirement or a Beatles adventure game. Actually, it's an innovative music program that turns your C-64 into a synthesizer and multi-track recorder.

Here's how it works: you begin by choosing waveform, filter settings, envelope, etc., for each of the three oscillators or voices. Then, by pressing SHIFT-F1, you enter the record mode and can input the notes for Voice 1 via the keyboard. Don't worry about the timing. Once all the notes for Voice 1 have been entered, you just turn on the "click-track," and adjust the timing by playing the piece along with the beat. This time, however, you can simply press the same key repeatedly and the note will change automatically according to what you input the first time around.

The parts for voices 2 and 3 are input similarly, using F3 and F5. As each new voice is layered on top of the existing tracks, you can accent individual notes and add vibrato. The final recording can then be saved on disk.

What really sets this one apart from other music programs is a fourth voice—one that sings! That's right. When used with *The Voice Box* ($95), also from The Alien Group, *When I'm 64* lets you program an animated face to sing along with your compositions. There is even a graphics mode so you can change the face (when you see it, you'll know why). Don't let the horrible demo songs that come on the disk discourage you.

The Alien Group, $29.95

Synthesound

If you already play a keyboard instrument and would like to turn your C-64 or VIC-20 into a versatile music synthesizer, then *Synthesound* is the program for you. It features two onscreen music keyboards that correspond to specific keys on your computer. When you play a note on the computer, a dot appears on the appropriate onscreen key. This quickly lets you get a feel for actually "playing" your computer.

Although there are other programs that let you control all parameters of the sound and use the keyboard as an instrument, the designers of *Synthesound* have gone to great lengths to include many of the features found on real synthesizers. For instance, you can tune each of the three voices independently in increments of one-quarter of a half-step. By playing two voices in sync (both on the same note at the same time) with one of them detuned by this small amount, you get that lush, full, synthetic sound that gives music a real electronic flavor.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 38

LISTEN TO THESE PROGRAMS!

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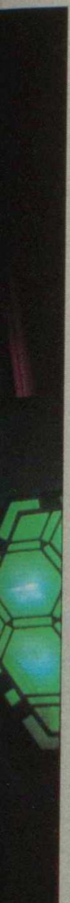
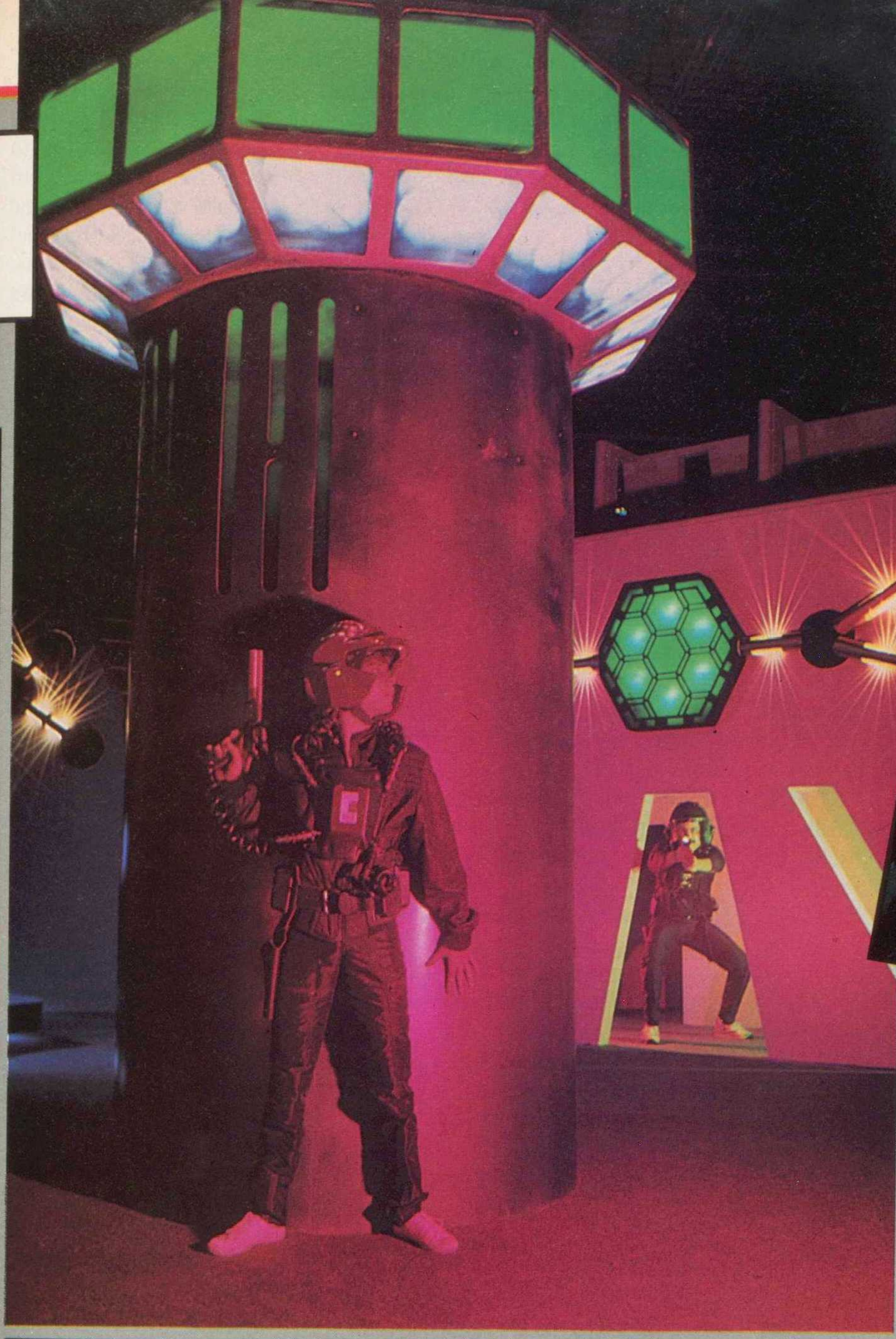
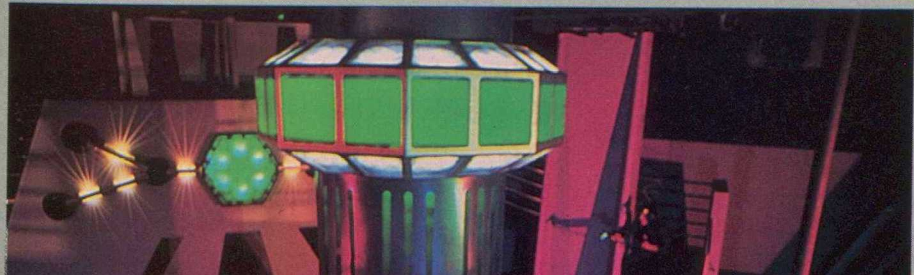
PHOTON

THE LIVING COMPUTER GAME

Planet Photon, located in Dallas, Texas, adds a new dimension to computer games—the third dimension. Instead of manipulating blips on a screen, players suit up with helmets and "phaser guns" and shoot beams of light (photons) at each other, as in *Star Wars*. Two teams play at a time. The game is a high-tech version of hockey—you've got to protect your goal at one end and get past the other team's goal to shoot it with a phaser.







Four computers control Planet Photon. Each player wears a vest with a microprocessor in it that tells the central computers when the player has been hit by a phaser gun. The computer will then make a yellow light flash on that player's radio-controlled helmet and turn off or ''disrupt'' his phaser for ten seconds. Points are then won and lost this way, and a scoreboard above registers the action. Artificial fog machines, electronic synthesizers, tunnels and light pulse generators add to the ***Star Wars*** effect. It costs $3 to play a six-minute game of Photon, and the company plans to have 100 Photons in operation around the country by the end of the year. Computer games are leaping off the screen and into reality! ▱

COMPUTER MUSIC

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 35

Also, the voices can be assigned to the two keyboards in eight different combinations. When the Accompaniment Keyboard is set on "CHORD," any notes you hold down will produce an automatic arpeggio. There is even pitch-bending, although the rate is a little too slow for most purposes.

Finally, you can save up to 256 different combinations of synthesizer settings in a single register file on disk. To get back any of the sounds or "patches" you've created, simply load the file and press ":" or ";" until the number of the patch you want appears to the left of the solo keyboard.

Synthesound isn't perfect, but for the price, it's as close as you're going to come to turning your computer into a synthesizer.

HES, $29.95

Dancing Feats

Finally, a program for all you cats who don't know a G clef from an eighth note and don't really give a pig's butt. A program for all you cool improvisationalists who just want to pick up the nearest joystick and jam! The program is *Dancing Feats,* and it's the "paint-by-numbers" of computerized music.

After loading either the Atari or Commodore 64 version of *Dancing Feats,* the first thing you do is pick up a joystick. Then use it to select one of four preprogrammed bass lines—Jazz, Rock, Blues or my favorite, Boogie Woogie. Next, set the beat. Is it going to be Cool, Beguine, Syncopated or Dance? What about the style? Are you going to Swing it, or wail the Blues? Finally, choose an appropriate tempo and an ending, and you're ready to play some sizzling lead joystick.

All you have to do is maneuver the joystick to play along with the bass line and electronic percussion. The best part is that you're always in tune. As the bass cycles through a progression of three or four chords, the set of joystick-accessible notes also changes to stay in tune with the current chord. What's more, you can record jam sessions of up to an hour long into computer memory, and even save them on disk.

Naturally, reading about music software without hearing the programs in action is like discussing screen graphics without seeing the visuals. If you'd like to hear *Music Construction Set, Synthesound, MusiCalc 1* and other programs reviewed in this article, just call the Computer Games Hotline at (212) 581-8267. If you're looking for a music program to pump a little music out of your home computer, here are some others worth checking out.

For Atari Computers: *Keyboard Organ, The Magic Melody Box, Music I* and *II,* and *Player Piano* (Atari Program Exchange). *Music Composer* and *Atari Music I* and *II* from Atari, Inc.

For Apple Computers: *Music Maker* (Sublogic Communication Corp.) and *Electronic Duet* (Insoft).

For the T199/4A: *Music Maker* (Texas Instruments).

For the TRS-80: *Radio Shack Color Computer Music.*

ADVENTURE GAMES

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 22

to write an adventure: you have to be a serious, good writer to start with."

Simon and Schuster recently announced a line of games that will be based on the novels of several classic science fiction authors, including Robert Heinlein's *Glory Road* and others by Poul Anderson, Fred Saberhagen, Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle. (Some may wind up as arcade-type games, though.) And fans of *A Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* will soon roar with laughter at an all-text version of Douglas Adams' comedic trilogy. Synapse Software is even calling its new line of all-text adventures "Electronic Novels," the first titles being *Mind Wheels* and *Enigma.*

Save the Dragons!

But will technological advances be employed to recreate the same tired "swords and sorcery" games? After all, you can only slay so many dragons before your imagination begins to grow restless. (The S.P.C.D.—Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Dragons—has already started lobbying game programmers and software houses to "Save the Dragon!" in an effort to head off this nasty possibility, not to mention rescuing an endangered species from otherwise certain extinction.) Does the future merely promise new ways to experience the same old scenarios? Will gamers be limited to playing holographic versions of *Zork 99* a hundred years from now?

Berlyn surmises that "the reason there's so much fantasy out there now is that people [at the software houses] think that's what the public wants. It'll probably continue for another five years, though I think it's peaked. *Zork* and *Deadline* are our most popular games, and *Tales of Adventure* is really cruising. But the topic of an adventure isn't as important as whether or not it's fun to play. *Wizardry* would be just as much fun to play even if it were a detective game rather than a 'Dungeons and Dragons' type, because it's a *fun activity.*" Transforming educational software into a "fun activity" represents another new direction for adventures: both Infocom and Penguin will release games along these lines, the latter enlisting a cartoon-like character from *Spy's Demise* in their series.

On the subject of holographic adventures, Berlyn is noncommital: "The better the level of reality simulation, the better the adventure. Whether holography will improve the quality remains to be seen. And as far as video disc-based adventures, the hardware doesn't really exist yet, but there will be software for it when it does—and it will be at least five years before there's a large enough installed base." Pelczarski concurs, reasoning that there have to be enough homes with the same type video disc player *and* the same kind of computer for such games to be economically viable. An outfit now developing a video disc technology in New Hampshire hopes to circumvent this roadblock. John Connor of Video Troupe says his company's putting the actual program on the disc as well as the motion picture-quality graphics, eliminating the need for a computer. A $29 box would interface the video disc player to a standard television, and the company hopes to sell the technology to someone like Parker or Atari.

Within five years, Pelczarski predicts that on-line multi-player adventure games will be available, allowing dozens of adventurers to explore the same "mini-universe" at once. As in CompuServes's *MegaWars* and Plato HomeLink's *Empire,* accessible to all modem owners today, adventurers could band together and cooperate for success, or fight among themselves. "The technology's already here," explains Pelczarski. "It's just a matter of dedicating a central computer to adventures, attracting subscribers and so on."

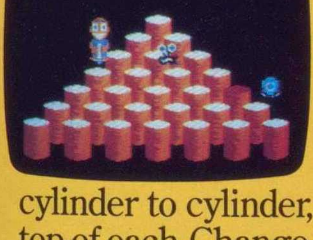
But what about 1,000 years in the future? Berlyn envisions "actually living the adventure. All your senses will be stimulated. Just like in Lewis Carrol's *Through the Looking Glass,* you should be able to walk right through the screen." Pelczarski shares this vision, and confidently predicts, "One thing *is* certain—adventure games are the future of computer games."

CLUE #3: HISTORY, SPORTS, ENTERTAINMENT, GRAB BAG

Jump on 10 monsters, 64 screens and $10,000 with Pogo Joe.™

BEST ANIMATION OF THE YEAR
COMPUTER GAMES MAGAZINE

A Mutated Wonderwhisk whisks by. The Spinning Top almost topples him!


PLAYER 1
JOES:4
20
POGO JOE
PLAYER 2
JOES:5
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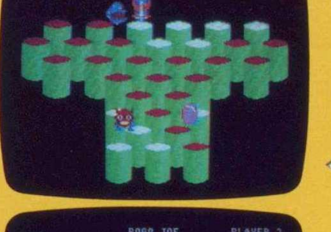
Close. But Pogo Joe bounces back. Bouncing from cylinder to cylinder, screen to screen, Pogo Joe racks up point after point.

You guide him from cylinder to cylinder, changing the color on top of each. Change the top of each cylinder on a screen, then you're on to the next.


PLAYER 1
JOES:4
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POGO JOE
PLAYER 2
JOES:5
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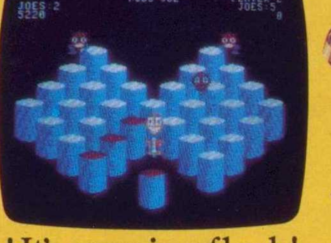
The more screens you complete, the nastier the monsters you face, and the faster they attack.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5220
POGO JOE
PLAYER 2
JOES:5
0

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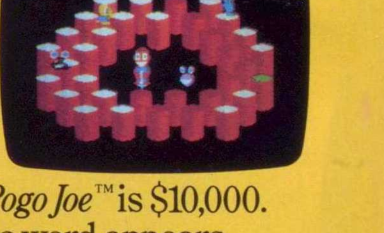
PLAYER 1
JOES:5
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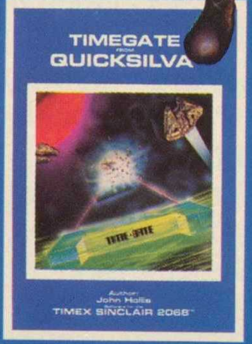
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CAN YOU SURVIVE?

DISCS OF TRON

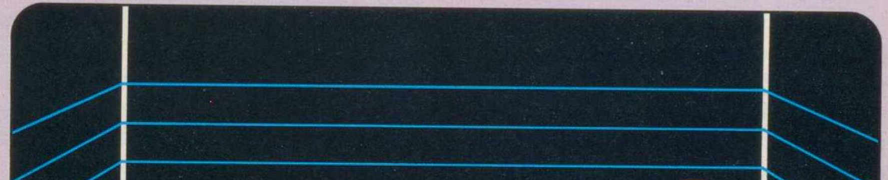
Most arcade games are straightforward—the players with the quickest hands and the quickest minds achieve the highest scores. But sometimes a game will have a hidden trick in the program that will allow *anyone* to rack up big points—*if* they know the trick. Here is a situation that involves one of these devices. Would *you* be able to use it?

THE CRISIS:

Sark has unleashed his deadliest weapon—a fireball with orbiting disks. As the ball closes in, you notice you have only one deflector left and you'll have to save it as a defense against faster-moving weapons. What should you do?

THE SOLUTION:

Use all the room available on your platforms to make wide ovals around the slowly following fireball. Each time you pass in front of the fireball, throw a disk into it by carefully lining up your cursor on the opposite wall. By hitting the fireball with disk after disk, you can gradually wear it down and destroy it.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY NINA WALLACE

BEAT IT!

FIREFOX

Atari's entry into this year's laserdisc derby, *Firefox*, combines spectacular filmed footage from the Clint Eastwood movie of the same name with outstanding digital graphics. The result is a breathtaking, first-person aerial combat game that surpasses all similar efforts to date.

Unlike *MACH 3* where all that was required was the total annihilation of enemy targets while keeping your fighter in one piece, *Firefox* gives you a lot to do and think about as well as a purpose for your mission: To protect national security interests by stealing the world's most advanced military aircraft—the Soviet-built *Firefox*, and safely retrieving it for the United States.

> **"If you get detected, changing your altitude will start the radar again and give you another shot at the bonus."**

GETTING STARTED

The first thing you must do is decide the length of the mission you will undertake. For 50 cents, you can choose either a 3,000 or 6,000 mile mission, while 75 cents will buy you a 9,000 mile or unlimited mission. The decision is yours. But until you've mastered the 6,000 mile mission, you'll be wasting a quarter by attempting anything harder. Also, the 3,000 mile mission is far too short and easy. Once it's over, so's the game. For most gamers, 6,000 miles is the best value.

Firefox is piloted with the same type of control introducted on Atari's *Star Wars*—duel handgrips with fire buttons below both index fingers and thumbs. In this case, the triggers are used for machine-gun fire while the thumb-buttons launch the powerful missiles needed to destroy other Firefox prototypes. Also, in addition to controlling the position of your on-screen gunsight, *Firefox*'s controls are used to select flight paths, to pull up out of collision courses with mountainsides, and to provide lift on take-offs.

AVOIDING DETECTION

The single most important key to successful missions and high scores is avoiding detection. If the Russians don't know you're around, they can't fire at you. This is accomplished by destroying all radar signals before they can grow large enough to detect your plane.

The radar signals appear first as small red dots but quickly expand into a target of concentric red rings. If left to grow, large black rings will soon appear and you will be detected. Try to destroy each radar signal the instant it appears. As soon as you do, be ready for the next one, and the next, and so forth.

Try to watch the whole screen at once using peripheral vision to spot new signals. The best players are aggressive and move the controls quickly and accurately. Rather than firing constantly, alternate between moving the gunsight and firing. Finally, unless you have a good half-second to spare, don't bother trying to pick off the Soviet Migs that keep darting across the screen. Until you're detected they are harmless and should be ignored.

The reward for successfully avoiding detection through any phase of the mission is a 25,000 point bonus. Doing this two or three times in the course of a mission will guarantee you a high-scoring game. If you fail to blast a radar signal in time, the Migs will spot you and immediately commence firing. To avoid getting hit you must blow their gunfire and missiles out of the sky. By destroying their shots before you are hit, you will conserve fuel. Repeated hits rapidly deplete Firefox's fuel supply and ultimately result in a short mission ending with a crash landing.

HIGH OR LOW?

At the end of each short phase of the game, you will be given a choice of flying at a high altitude or close to the ground. You make your selection by tilting the controls back for sky, and forward for ground. There are three things to consider when making this decision:

1) If you were detected during the previous phase, changing your route (air to ground or vice versa) will restart the radar and give you another shot at the bonus.

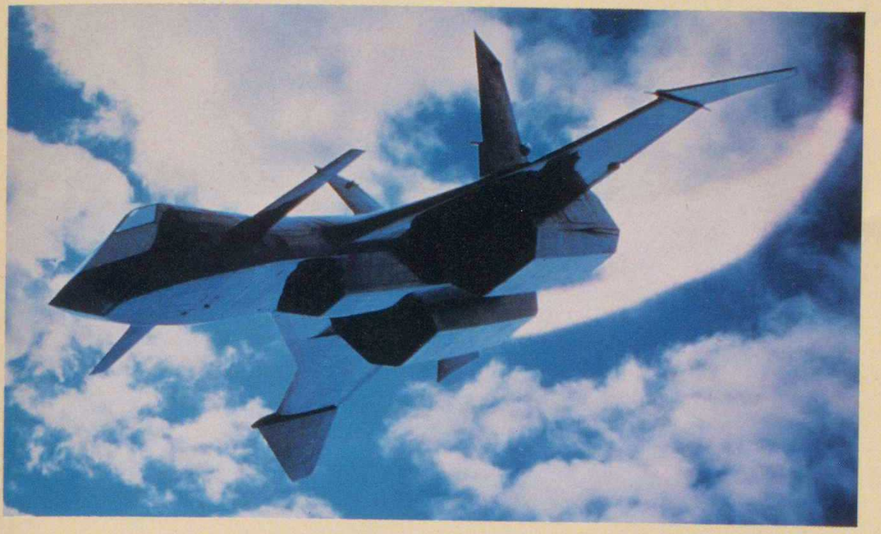
2) By flying in the sky you will conserve fuel but . . .

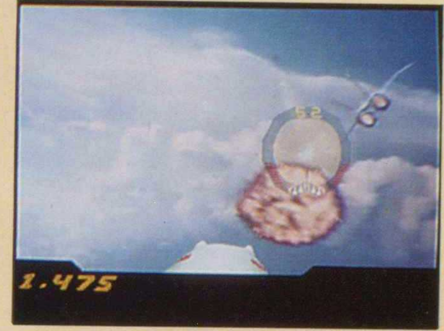
3) By taking the ground route you may find and destroy secret bases for additional bonus points.

The biggest problem most players have is running out of fuel. Therefore, I recommend taking the high route unless you must restart the radar. Another disadvantage to taking the ground route is that, because of the dark background, it's more difficult to spot radar signals when flying low.

After a while, Firefox will automatically descend close to a flat ice field with a mountain ridge straight ahead. If you chose the high route for the preceding phase, the radar will be restarted when the computer takes you down low. If you come into the ice field from a ground route, the radar status won't change because your altitude has remained constant. If you have been detected, the Migs will continue to fire.

Don't worry about crashing into the ridge until you're almost on top of it. At this point, the screen will switch





Firefox is Atari's first laserdisc game and it is spectacular. Using actual footage and sound from the Clint Eastwood movie, your mission is to steal the world's most advanced aircraft from the Russians. The game is more complex than the similar-looking M.A.C.H. 3, by Mylstar. Hollywood is starting to look at laser-disc games as a way to make motion pictures interactive. Extra scenes are being shot with many new movies for the purpose of turning them into games.

briefly to a shot of a pilot's hands pulling back on the controls. Do likewise immediately and you'll clear the ridge every time. This same "inside-the-cockpit" shot will recur at other times during the mission. When it does, simply tilt the controls back to avoid crashing.

When you clear the ridge, a homing device will be activated and you'll begin the final run before refueling at Mother One. Firefox will enter an icy trench where you'll continue to battle the Migs. At no time should you use your thumb-activated missiles to battle the Migs, their shots or radar signals. Destroy everything in the trench using only your machine guns.

When given the signal, pull back on the controls. Firefox will appear to lift out of the trench and fly straight into a snowy mountainside. Relax, you've made it to Mother One.

Here, as a team of mechanics and engineers prepare Firefox for the next part of the mission, you will be awarded bonus points for the planes you've shot down and the number of missiles and fuel units you have left. Additional fuel units will be awarded based on your performance so far and you'll take off once again for the second part of the mission.

This time the radar signals come much quicker, but the first phase after refueling is very short. Therefore, if you can just avoid detection for about ten seconds, you will collect another 25,000 point bonus. By the time you realize that you've avoided detection through the first phase, the radar begins again, so be ready for it.

During this part of the mission, once you've been detected you've got *real* problems. The enemies now include a second Firefox prototype with the same capabilities as the one you're flying. The only way to destroy it is with your missiles and since you've only got a limited supply, you'd better aim carefully.

As the game progresses, additional Firefoxes join the battle, and avoiding detection becomes even more difficult. If you can overcome all these obstacles and complete the entire mission, the message "Ice up a cold one, I'm coming home" will appear on-screen. If you're like most Firefox pilots, however, you'll probably just stick around to try a harder mission.

MINIMUM SCORE POTENTIAL: 150,000

BEAT IT!

LODE RUNNER

This computer classic by Broderbund puts you in the role of the Galactic Commando. Your job is to recover a fortune in gold boxes that the Bungeling empire has stolen from its people. Armed with a laser drill pistol, you must capture all the gold boxes on 150 different screens while avoiding the Bungeling Guards. The pistol blasts holes in the brick floors of the game's structures. Holes can be used to escape (to a lower level) or to trap enemy guards. After eight seconds, a hole will fill itself in. If someone is in it at the time, he dies. While it would take a book-length "Beat It" to guide you step-by-step through all 150 screens, the following tips will get you through some of the toughest *Lode Runner* screens.

Although several specific screens are mentioned in the following tips, the strategies apply to many of the game's screens.

> **"There is a spot on each screen that makes the guards change direction. You can cause a guard coming down a ladder above you to run away."**

THE IMPOSSIBLE JOBS

Gold boxes are often placed near the top of the screen in inaccessable locations. Since the reinforcements that appear each time you trap and kill Bungeling Guards always enter the screen from the top in random locations, you can have the gold brought into reach by the reinforcements. It can take quite a while to get all the boxes within your reach, but patience pays off.

This strategy is especially useful on Level 30, where you're separated from the gold at the top left by a trap door. Because of other trap doors, the guards usually end up trapped on the platform near the bottom of the screen. By climbing down onto the ledge on the left side of that platform, you can bring all the guards to the left. Then drop down on the right side of the platform and blast away five holes to trap the guards with. Be sure to leave one hole to escape through.

Unfortunately, this strategy can backfire. On Level 25, for example, the reinforcements may enter at the top left, only to fall into a trap. If all the guards end up in the trap on the left before bringing down the gold on the right, you've got to try the level over again. By the 25th level, however, you should be able to build up a good reserve of extra men.

SAVE SOME BOXES

When boxes are in a location you can get into, but not out of, save these for last. If you're certain you've collected all other gold on the screen, go after the final boxes. When the escape ladders appear, you're home free. Don't be too quick to put gold into this category, though. Usually, there is some other way to get in and out.

This situation shows up as early as Level eight, where a deep central well contains one gold box and a guard, but no way out. By saving this box for last, the escape ladders that appear after the final box has been recovered can be used to climb out of the well to safety, and the next level.

Similarly, a small escape ladder will appear on Level 150 to bridge the gap between the two boxes at the bottom center, and the right side of the screen. Just be sure to save those two for last.

MASTER YOUR LASER DRILL

Whether you dig forward or behind your commando, learn to use the laser drill effectively. When guards are charging you, make sure the holes you dig are between you and the guards. It's easy to trap yourself by drilling a hole on the wrong side. Also, if there's only one guard coming, don't drill a lot of holes if you plan on running over him to the other side.

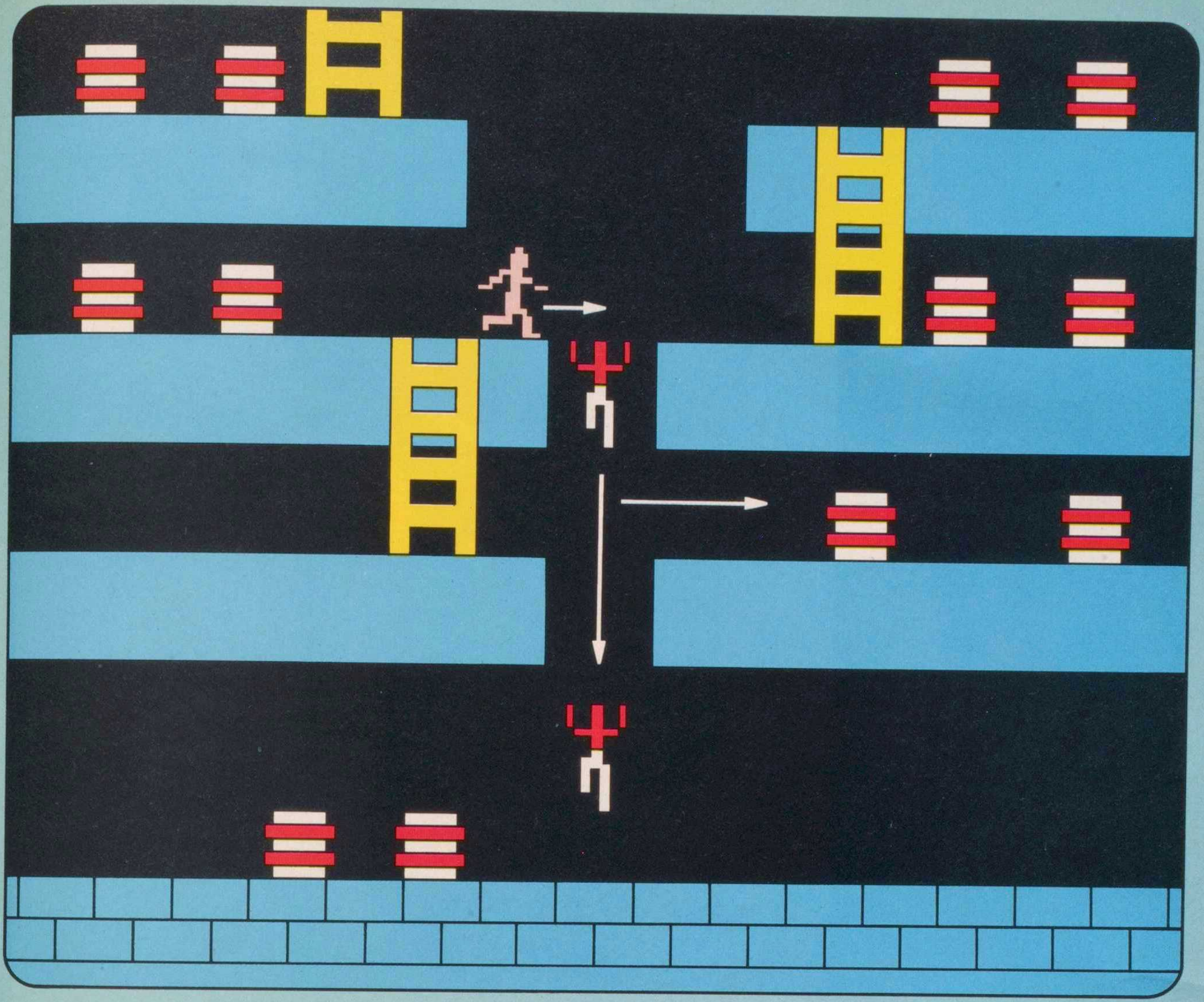
Learn to dig a line of holes quickly. Sometimes boxes are buried four or five layers deep. Since you lose one space for every layer you descend (you always need one brick to stand on while digging), you'll need to make the initial hole four or five bricks wide.

While you can't dig out the brick directly below a ladder, you can blast bricks on each side of a ladder. Just start at the top and work your way down. It's even possible to dig while hanging from the horizontal ropes. All you have to do is put one foot on the corner of a diggable brick and drill away. Use this tactic to free the guards on Level 66.

CONTROL THE GUARDS' ACTIONS

There are certain spots on almost every *Lode Runner* screen that cause the guards to change direction. Usually, when guards are chasing you and you run up a ladder, the guards will turn and run in the opposite direction—if you stop just a few rungs up. If you head straight to the top, however, they'll only pause for a split second before following you up. You can even cause a guard who is coming down a ladder directly above you to run away from you as you charge up the ladder. Be careful, though. A little too far and he'll head back down.

One of my favorite examples of "guard-control" is on Level 53. Here, you can send pursuing guards scurrying to the opposite side of the screen by either climbing up to about the second rung of the ladder at the bottom left or running up to the sec-



To complete level 64, you must walk off the left platform onto the falling guard's head, ride him down and cross over.

ond step of the stair-like structure at the bottom right.

Everyone knows that the Bungeling guards' heads can be walked across when they're caught in a hole, but did you know that you can ride on their heads as they fall? In fact, to complete Level 64, you must walk off the second platform on the left, onto the head of a falling guard, and ride him down to the first level of the platforms on the right!

SPARE A GUARD'S LIFE

There are many instances in which killing a guard is the *last* thing you want to do. Take, for example, Level 50. You begin at the bottom left. At the top right there's a small platform with two boxes on it. Since the only way to get off the platform once you land on it is by digging through to the bottom, any guards that land on it are stuck forever. Therefore, if you kill any guards before the platform has been cleared of blocks, the reinforcements may land right in this trap as they enter the screen, making it impossible to safely clear.

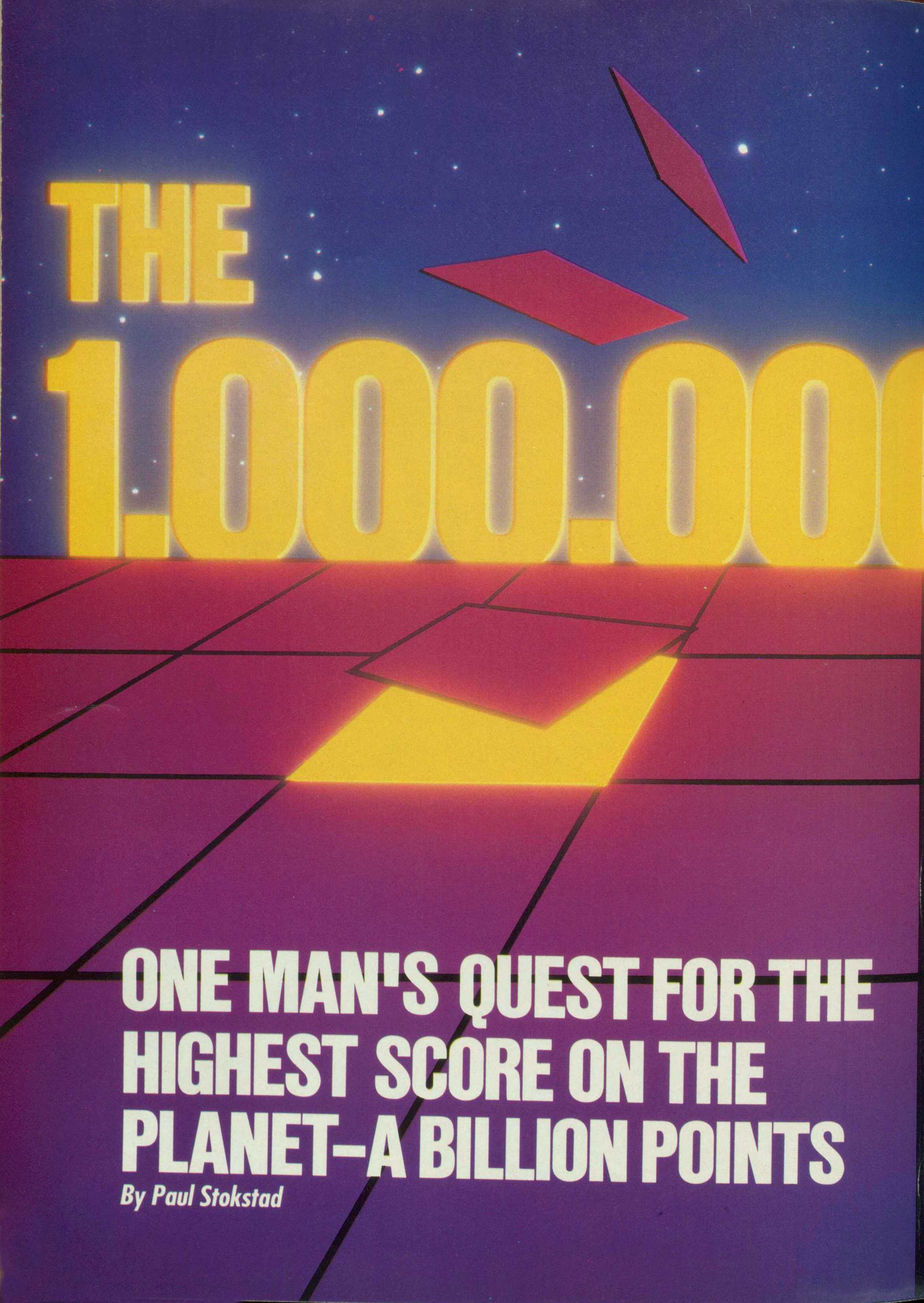
It can also be dangerous to kill guards when you're at the top of the screen. Reinforcements often appear right beside the Galactic Commando. Also, if you want to keep all the guards on one side of the screen, killing one could land his replacement on the wrong side. This can be a real problem on level 19, where you'll want to keep all the guards on the left side most of the time. If you must dig a hole to delay a pursuing guard, and you don't want him to die when it closes, wait until he's fairly close before blasting out a hole.

HE WHO HESITATES...

Speed is important—especially when running over undiggable floors or retrieving gold boxes from deep inside chambers that will seal up forever if you don't get out in time. On Level 32, for instance, you must dig into one chamber at the bottom of the screen, climb a small ladder and blast away two bricks to open an inner chamber. You must then get the gold and escape from both rooms before either closes up on you.

By studying each level before you attempt it, you can develop a plan for clearing the screen. If you have to stop to think of your next move, make sure the guards are isolated in another section of the screen. Otherwise, freeze the action.

MINIMUM SCORE POTENTIAL:
250,000



THE 1,000,00

ONE MAN'S QUEST FOR THE HIGHEST SCORE ON THE PLANET—A BILLION POINTS

By Paul Stokstad

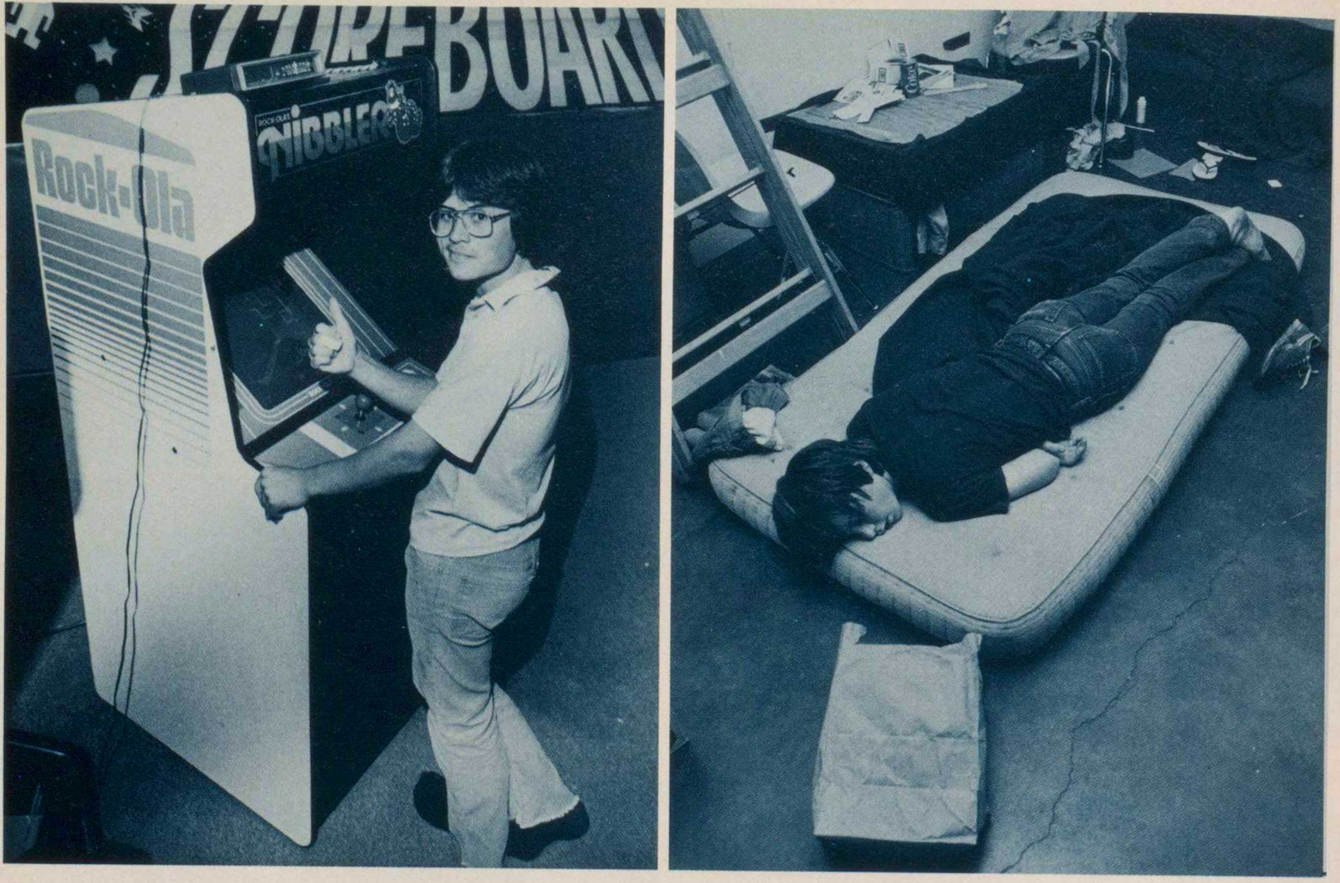
.000 POINT
GAME

A billion points. They once said no man would run an under-four-minute mile, and it was done. They said no man would ever break Babe Ruth's home run records, and it was done. They said no man would ever scale Mount Everest, and it was done. But to score a billion—count 'em—points at an arcade game! That has never been done. Now there's a feat that is truly impossible.

Well, on January 17th, the impossible became possible.

It didn't happen overnight. Actually, it happened over two nights, from 2:00 on Sunday afternoon to 10:45 in the morning on Tuesday, January 17th. That's when 17-year-old Tim McVey, of Ottumwa, Iowa, nearly collapsed with relief after playing the arcade game *Nibbler* for 44 hours and 45 minutes. His score—1,000,042,270 points. Tim was, and still is as we

PHOTOGRAPH BY WALTER WICK



UPI

Tom Asaki lasted 40 hours, but never hit a billion. At right, he takes a nap in the middle of a game.

go to press, the only person on earth to score a billion points at an arcade game.

What does it take to score a billion points? Sure, you've got to be a terrific player. You've got to have whip-like reflexes, superior peripheral vision and the strategy to beat all strategies. But you've got to have more. For one thing, you've got to get motivated.

One night Tim McVey strolled into Walter Day's Twin Galaxies in Ottumwa and noticed the hush of attention surrounding Tom Asaki, whom you may remember as a member of the Think Tank that beat *Ms. Pac-Man* (see *Computer Games,* April). Tim asked what all the fuss was about, and somebody explained to him that Asaki had been playing the game *Nibbler* for two days on a single quarter and that he was up to 770 million points. McVey was shocked. He had never heard of anyone getting a score that high. Tom Asaki was hard at work on his quest to be the first person in the world to score a billion points. Asaki failed, but he inspired McVey. He had never even played *Nibbler,* but wanted to give it a try.

Tim quickly became addicted to *Nibbler* and started nibbling away at the top scores at the game. Tim and Asaki, both chasing the same dream, started spending a lot of time together and comparing notes. Sometimes they would play a game together, switching off every ten million points. Gradually McVey began to memorize the secret codes on the board that tell you how many men you have left. This is significant information on *Nibbler,* because you can die out by having too many men as well as none at all.

No matter how good you are and how slick your strategy, you can't even score a lousy million points unless you can marathon. Marathoning means having the endurance and stamina to play for long periods of time. It's not uncommon for a guy to collapse with exhaustion in the middle of a marathon game, or for his bicep muscle to just spasm up and call it quits. A few months ago, a guy named Chris Emory was marathoning *Q*Bert* at Twin Galaxies and he fell asleep three times in the middle of the game. Each time he nodded off, his friends picked him up and threw him in the shower in the back of the arcade. Mark Klug, who holds the world record at *Pole Position,* got so tired during a game that he rested his arms by driving the qualifying laps with his feet. Running a 26-mile marathon race almost seems easy compared to staring intently into a little glowing screen for two days, concentrating the whole time.

Walter Day has observed that the better arcade game marathoners seem to be physically big guys. There's no scientific data, but big guys just seem to be able to stay awake and alert longer. Tim McVey is just 5'8'', but solid.

There's one more factor that goes into a billion-point game—the game. Tom Asaki didn't pick *Nibbler* because he liked the game so much. Actually, it's a fairly mediocre game. But it is a high-scoring game. *Nibbler* has what Walter Day calls "the highest points per hour threshold." This means that you can score a lot of points in a relatively short amount of time. Asaki considered going for the billion on *Robotron,* but it occured to him that it would take about a week of nonstop play...with no sleep. Some games make it impossible to score a billion. *Q* Bert,* for instance, causes strange things to happen. Five separate people have reported that after playing the game for long periods of time, they would start hallucinating! The configuration of cubes, like an optical illusion, would invert or turn inside out, making it impossible to keep track of what was going on.

So Tim McVey had all the ingredients:

INTERNATIONAL
NIBBLER
TIM McVEY DAY
CONGRATULATIONS FOR SCORING 1,000,000,000 POINTS
OTTUMWA

PHOTOGRAPH BY CATHY MEDDIN-ROBINSON

Billionaire Tim McVey and arcade owner Walter Day.

he's a great player, he's strong, he's got the stamina, he's got the right game and he knows all the tricks to play it. Tricks like building up 127 extra men by level 99 and then leaving the game, letting the snake circle the board automatically. When you do this, you get 12,000 points and you lose a guy. You will lose as many as 20 men in just ten minutes, but you get to take a little break that your body needs to survive such stress. Even master arcade game marathoners have to go to the bathroom once in a while.

There's one more attribute a master marathoner needs—persistence. Nobody, not even Tim McVey, scores a billion points the first time out of the box. You make dumb mistakes. You have a bad day. Worst of all, the machine dies on you. Consider Tom Asaki's history of persistent nibbling...

- First try: Scored 838 million and lost his last man after 40 hours.
- Second try: Scored 707 million and lost by getting over the maximum 127 men.
- Third try: Got to 793 million, and then the joystick broke. Attempts to fix it short-circuited the machine and Tom's score.
- Fourth try: Scored 120 million and the machine broke again. Asaki: "I just had to sit there and watch my men die."

Asaki never reached a billion. When McVey took the baton, his luck wasn't much better...

- First try: Scored 168 million, then somebody hit a circuit breaker at the arcade and the score was erased.
- Second try: Scored 403 million and was too tired to go on after 22 hours.
- Third try: Scored 113 million and the joystick died on him.

> **"Five people began hallucinating in the middle of marathon *Q*Bert* games. The cubes started to turn inside out in their brains."**

- Fourth try: Scored 716 million and lost his last man after 31 hours.
- Fifth try: Scored 410 million and the screen blanked out. It is suspected that someone pulled the plug intentionally.
- Sixth try: Scored 208 million and a circuit breaker erased the score.
- Seventh try: Bingo—a billion points! Persistence paid off.

Something must be said for the value of encouragement—for those unsung heroes who don't score a point but slap you awake every few hours and stick slices of pizza into your face so you don't fall over with hunger. In Tim's case it was Bill Mitchell and Chris "Tempest" Ayra, who stayed awake the entire 44 hours with him and kept him psyched up and nibbling away at the billion.

So what happens once you've got the inspiration, skill, endurance like a tank and a little help from your friends? You go out and nail the billion, that's what. McVey rolled along for the first 800 million points like nothing was going to stop him—no mechanical failures, no human errors. But suddenly a friend burst into the arcade with a certified letter claiming that somebody else had just scored two billion at *Nibbler*! McVey was crushed. What's the use of going for a billion when somebody else has already hit two billion? Psychologically defeated, he lost some of his men, but he kept on playing. A closer reading of the letter revealed that it was a two-man team that had reached two billion—one played while the other slept! Encouraged, McVey pushed on toward 900 million.

People are going for high scores at Twin Galaxies all the time, but when McVey started closing in on a billion, the local news station got excited and rushed a camera crew over to record the event. McVey, already exhausted and losing his supply of men, had to fight off the glare on the screen caused by the blinding camera lights. By the time he reached 990 million, he only had six men left.

Human beings have a way of doing the impossible when the pressure is on. No doubt you've heard stories of women lifting up Volkswagens when their children were trapped under them. Tim McVey, despite his fatigue, the lights and the ten million more points he needed, summoned up all the reserves of energy he had left. In those final minutes he actually won four more men, giving him ten, and when he completed a board with 999,950,950 points, he stood back and watched the bonus points ring up... 1,000,042,270. Then he walked away from the machine.

For his efforts, Tim McVey won a free *Nibbler* from the game's manufacturer, Rock-Ola. He also received the key to the city of Ottumwa, Iowa, which proclaimed a "Tim McVey Day" the next week. Now Tim is waiting for someone to break his record, and he says, "No matter what they get, I'm going to break it back." Until that happens, he's gunning for another goal—the first person to play an arcade game for 100 hours straight on a single quarter. According to Tim McVey, "I want to die or fall off my chair."

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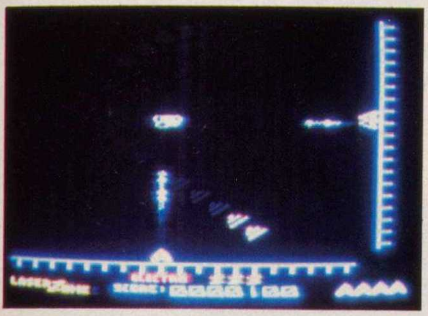
COMPUTER GAME BUYER'S GUIDE

By Shay Addams and Dan Gutman

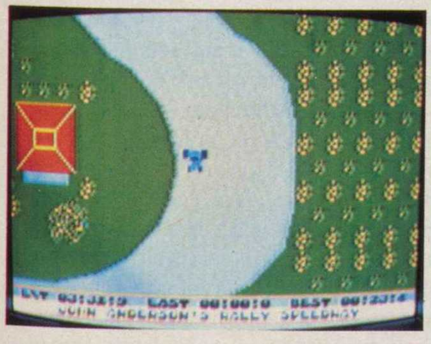


LAZER ZONE B-

VIC owners looking for a hot, quick-moving reflex-tester need look no further. *Lazer Zone* differs from other shoot-outs in that you defend two planes at the same time—the bottom of the screen and the right side. Your two cannons on these surfaces move independently and can fire "plasma" at Skullships and Bugships which float in from the top left. If your enemies reach your bases, you can smart-bomb them with electrobolts from the keyboard.

Graphically, *Lazer Zone* is very simple, but the sound is clean and powerful. The game gets very difficult over 31 skill levels, but doesn't change much along the way. Controlling two cannons demands more concentration than most shoot-'em- ups.

HES, for VIC-20

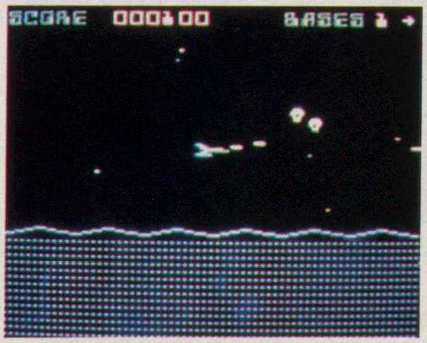


RALLY SPEEDWAY A

Plenty of horsepower under the hood of this game: an aerial view of the track, the option to create your own courses, and the greatest two-player version of a racing game *ever.* You can zip around either of the two built-in courses in a solitaire game, too, after setting factors such as top speed, rate of acceleration, and road conditions (dry, wet or icy). The car accelerates automatically, so you only have to concentrate on staying on the road—but plenty of hairpin curves make this difficult unless you hit the fire button-controlled brakes in time. If you smash into the trees or houses alongside the track, your car explodes. Then the driver rolls out, extinguishing his suit, and waves to signal he's safe.

This is the only racing game that puts both cars on the track simultaneously in two-player mode. If one car outruns the other to the point of leaving the screen, the second driver sustains a five-second penalty and the race takes off again from that point. Sound effects are superb, and the animation's lively. What's missing? The option of using paddles, which would provide more realistic steering.

Adventure International, for Atari

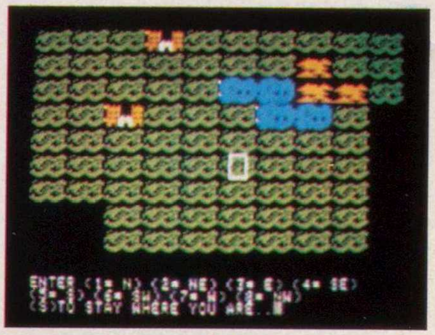


AQUATRON C

Another pretty standard shoot-'em-up that kind of grows on you. *Aquatron* is a horizontally scrolling *Defender*-clone with a twist—you've got battles to fight both in the air and under the water. There are no little frogmen down there to rescue, but it's to your advantage to catch the *Time Pilot*-like parachutes dropping out of the sky—they'll turn into missile-spewing submarines when they hit the water. There are six other enemies you'll have to contend with, and the game lends itself to multiple strategies—you don't just shoot everything in sight.

The graphics are very simple and the sound is average Apple. There are a few nice touches—you make a real splash when you dive into the water, and when you blow up your own base it breaks apart in convincing slow-motion. The game is somewhat addicting, but it also can be monotonous.

Sierra On-Line, for Apple


ENTER (1= N) (2= NE) (3= E) (4= SE)
(5)TO STAY WHERE YOU ARE.

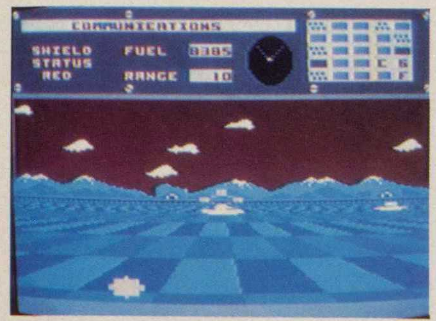
FORTRESS OF THE WITCH KING B

Find the fortress, kill the Witch King—simple premise, eh? Start off staring at a menu of options like Inventory, Look at Map, Use Spell and so on. First view the main map, which shows the parts of the kingdom you've already explored. Then check out the close-up, hi-res map of the immediate vicinity, which pinpoints the towns, castles, lakes and mountains. In the towns, you may buy more warriors, dwarves, wizards, magic spells, rations and other items. Your location is marked by a white square, and everything else is also color-coded on the main map.

Movement is conducted from the close-up map, where you press a key to move one square at a time. If you encounter

CLUE #4: INSPIRED BY THE GUNS OF NAVARRONE trolls, ogres or other beasts, an all-text display tells how the battle's going and gives you a chance to retreat or fight. Gold and other magic spells turn up here and there as you wander around, but you have to fight for them. After each turn, you can save the game. Twenty difficulty levels and randomly generated maps for each new game ensure you'll get plenty of adventuring for your money. Menu-driven adventures don't offer as much interaction as classic adventures, but aren't as frustrating, either. Unfortunately, the obnoxious sound effects can't be toggled off, or *Witch King* would have gotten an A.

Avalon Hill, for Apple



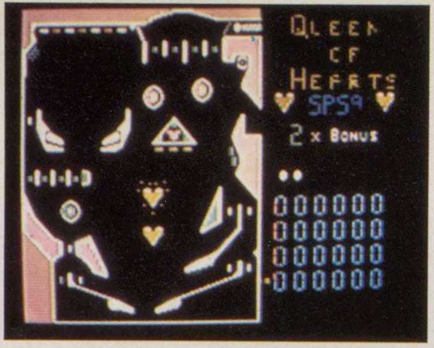
DIMENSION X

A

The Jarabolan desert, somewhere in space: piloting a warrior ship in this first-person shoot-'em-up, your mission is to protect the capital from hordes of Rigillian fighters. A desert map in the upper right-hand corner shows the planet's 25 sectors, each color-coded to indicate whether it's occupied by Rigillians, your fuel base or capital, or is unexplored. Blast every Rig in sight, then scan the radar or desert map for more. If you spot enemy ships behind you, just haul back on the joystick to instantaneously reverse your flight path.

To travel to a bordering sector and hunt down more of the enemy, refuel or zip into one of the tunnels that line your current location. The tunnels are like the trench scene in *Star Wars,* with horizontal "electrified Delta bars" that you have to fly over or under—but you must also swerve horizontally to avoid smashing into the walls. Accidents and Rigillian hits on your ship will weaken your shields, whose strength is displayed on the control panel. Sound effects, animation and play value are top-notch, and the view of the desert's surface as you skim low over it presents a stunning 3-D effect. With fewer shoot-'em-ups to choose from these days, it's reassuring to see a winner like *Dimension X.*

Synapse, for Atari and C-64



QUEEN OF HEARTS

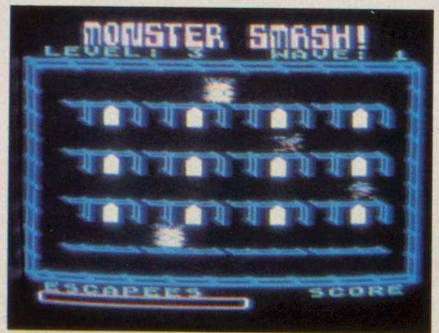
C

Why do people insist on creating pinball games for computers? Is it guilt over the fact that computer games have just about eliminated the pinball industry? Computer pinball games are fun, but never as much as the thumps and flashing lights of the real thing. (They don't take up as much space in your living room, though.)

Queen of Hearts is not the best computer pinball game we've seen. The ball doesn't feel like steel, it feels like rubber —bouncing crazily whether it hits a pop bumper, drop target or motionless flipper. It is too elastic. Also, the graphics and sound are not as advanced as similar games.

In the game's defense, it does have all the elements of pinball—rollovers, kick hole, sling shot, bonus multiplier, etc. But if you insist on playing pinball at home, we recommend *David's Midnight Magic* by Broderbund or Sublogic's *Night Mission Pinball.*

SSI, for Apple and Atari



MONSTER SMASH

A

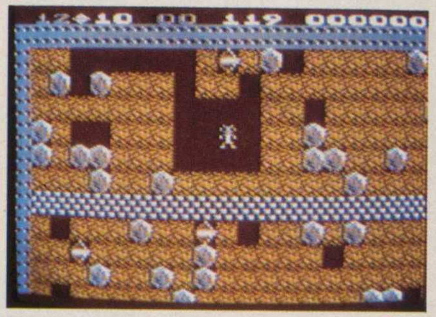
If you can't walk and chew gum at the same time, don't even *think* about buying *Monster Smash*. The eye/hand and brain/hand coordination demands are very tough.

You are the master of a graveyard, and you've got to prevent various monsters from escaping by bopping them on the head with tombstones. It's kind of like a "cute" *Night of the Living Dead.* The monsters slide out of the top and left side of the screen.

This would be just another twitch game if not for the "visitors" that drop by occasionally. You earn 1,000 points if these children pass through the graveyard unharmed. Therefore, you've got to learn selective bopping—kill the monsters but don't hit the kids. And it all happens so fast, you've almost got to give your unconscious the joystick.

Monster Smash is great mindless entertainment. It starts off easy and gets very hard very fast. The graphics and sound are simple, but the introductory music is worth the price of the game. There are nine levels, and you can try any of the first six with a tap of the joystick. Arcade games should be this good.

Datamost, for Atari and Apple.



BOULDER DASH

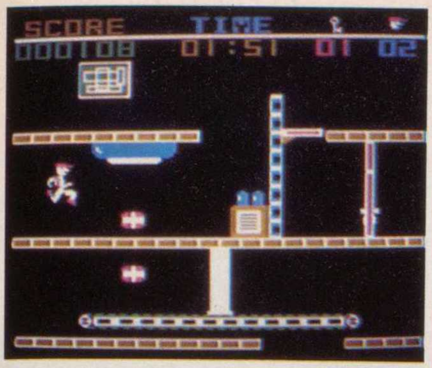
B+

Dig Dug fans will especially enjoy this similar, but faster, game. Instead of pumping up and exploding your foes, you ("Rockford") will drop boulders on fireflies and butterflies, suffocate amoebas, and smash through Enchanted Walls. It's all in the name of collecting the glittering jewels that are scattered throughout 16 caves.

To get to the jewels, you've got to get around the hundreds of boulders all over the scrollable screen. These rocks are more dangerous than *Dig Dug*'s—you can pick up one jewel and cause an avalanche that will bury the entire cave . . . and Rockford. The rocks fall according to natural gravity and physics. They are realistically rounded and sound like someone falling down a flight of stairs.

We would liked to have seen a higher point-scoring system and some final objective besides picking up more jewels. But *Boulder Dash* is a challenging digging maze game, with excellent graphics and perhaps the first playable intermissions in history. Different types of caves and tasks will keep you occupied longer than games that lack such depth. One or two players.

First Star, for Atari. Also for C-64, IBM.



THE HEIST A-

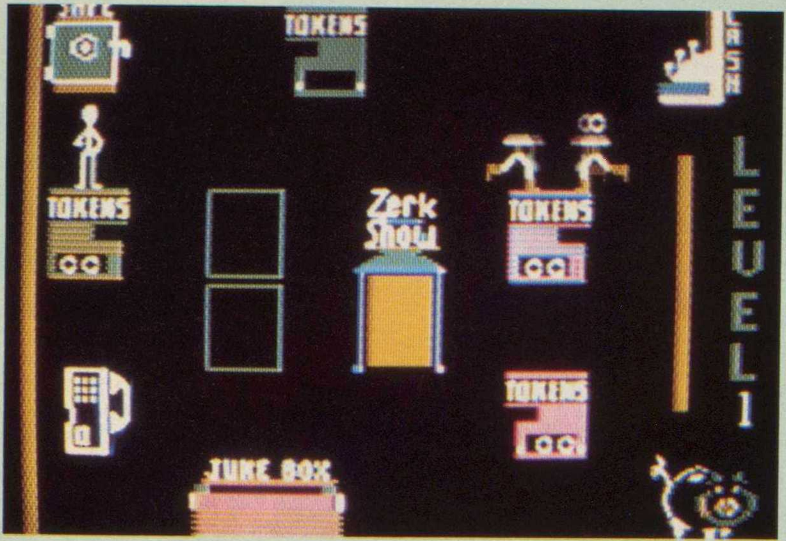
This game will make you say words we can't print in the magazine. It's one of the most frustrating games we've seen, and we mean that in the best possible way. You are Graham Crackers, a spy who must "steal" all the art in a museum and find a hidden micro dot. It's an odd museum—there are holes in the floor, man-eating robots, killer furniture, and death traps of every shape and size. Crackers has no weapon, but he can run, jump, crawl and go up escalators.

The Heist is frustrating because nothing is obvious. You must figure out, for example, that if you casually walk under the hanging triangle, it will fall on your head. Next time, you'll know. There are 143 other rooms with similar traps in them, and you're going to get nailed by most of them. But you discover something new each time you play.

The graphics in *The Heist* are spectacular and reminiscent of Activision's *Keystone Kapers*—brilliant colors and weird, incongruous objects. Everything moves slowly, so it is mainly a strategy game. Still, precise timing is required to jump from one platform to another. Our only gripe is that you have to start at the beginning each time you get killed. It would be nice if you could save a game in the middle.

Micro Fun, for Apple. Also for Atari, IBM, ColecoVision and C-64.

COMPUTER GAME OF THE MONTH



SPARE CHANGE A+

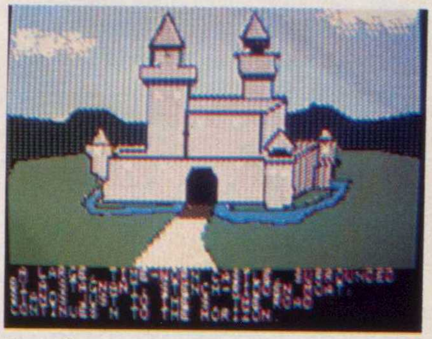
Most of the games that cross our desks are just slightly different from the ones that came before. Another shooting game. Another adventure game. Rarely do we see a game that is different and innovative. *Spare Change* is one of those rare delights.

You are an arcade owner , and the "Zerks" have escaped from an arcade game. They're trying to steal your tokens. You've got to run around the screen accumulating more tokens before the Zerks gather five, or the game is over.

What sounds like a simple eye-hand contest is actually very complex. There are token machines around the screen, not to mention pay phones, juke boxes, cash registers and safes. You can grab a bag of money out of the safe, put it in the cash register, collect some dollar bills, put them in the token machines, and finally get tokens. You can even put a token in the juke box and make the Zerks dance. As complicated as all this sounds, you'll pick it up after one try. The game requires some thinking, but not enough to make it aversive.

Spare Change is wildly original, nonviolent, semi-educational, with a terrific demo mode, cartoons, arcade graphics and sound. The adorable animated figures are so cute, you can't help but laugh. This is what games should be. Warning: not for the macho.

Broderbund, for Apple, Atari and C-64


CONTINUES N TO THE HORIZON.

THE QUEST A

As King Galt's advisor, your mission is to accompany the fighter Gorn and slay a dragon that's devastating the land. After picking up the usual lantern, rope and other items, you'll stroll out of the castle and down some colorful country roads in search of the elusive beast. The land is full of unique characters, such as the Lizard Men and a redheaded temptress named Lisa. Some will help you, others will cut your throat. Still others, like the Sphinx, demand that you solve a puzzle.

The parser's exceptional for a graphic adventure: it accepts complete and even multiple sentences. Graphics are well executed, but an occasional object will be hard to make out unless you have a hi-res monitor. Unlike most adventures, *Quest* provides you with a map that can be displayed onscreen. Tracking down the dragon may take months, but there's plenty of treasure to find and places to explore. More than 200 locations are waiting for you in this game, which takes up both sides of the disk.

Penguin, for Apple

SARGON III A+

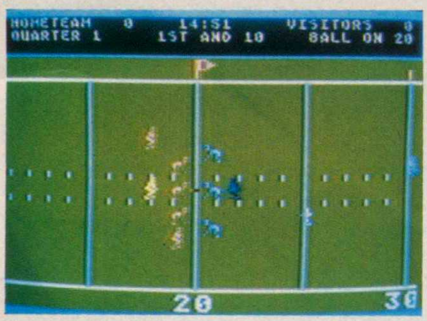
With *Sargon II,* you could only play

CLUE #5: ZERKS ARE ON THE LOOSE!

the computer. Now you can take on a human foe, and Sargon referees to ensure all moves are legal and to offer advice. When playing solitaire, enter your move from the keyboard, then wait for Sargon's response. It searches through a library of 68,000 moves on disk, the largest ever in a commercial game, and thinks for itself at later stages. Response time ranges from five seconds to infinity. As in *Sargon II*, you can take back a move, set up the pieces in any position, and switch sides with Sargon if the going gets rough.

But there's more: at last you can save an ongoing game to disk, print a list of the game's moves as well as current board position, and reverse the board if playing black. A second disk contains 107 classic games of the masters, which you can watch being played out one move at a time. Forty chess problems on tactics, end games and other topics are included on this disk, with answers in the excellent 80-page manual. This makes *Sargon III* perfect for anyone who wants to learn the game. And players who've been grabbing pawns for decades will appreciate the enhanced capabilities and other new features.

Hayden, for Apple

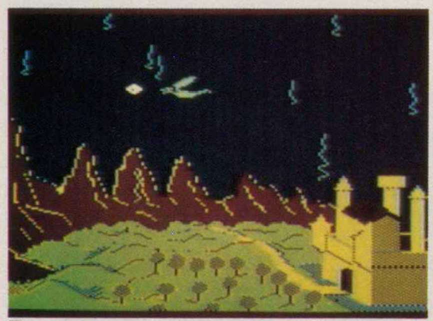


FOOTBALL A-

A complex sport like football is difficult to translate into a computer game—it's a tradeoff between playability and authenticity. (If you've ever tried throwing a pass in Gamestar's *Starbowl Football*, whose tricky process requires weeks of tedious practice to master, you know what we mean.) This version is much more playable: passing is a snap, and play selection is easier to execute. (The latter's due to the fact that you only get 20 plays to choose from instead of *Starbowl*'s 196.) The plays are limited to various screen passes, running plays, field goals and punts. No long bombs here. All play selection and action is joystick-manipulated.

The game's played with six members on each team, whose "control characters" are displayed in unique colors to simplify keeping track of them. There's no kickoff, and the point after a touchdown is automatic. Even so, the action's exciting, and you have the option of switching control to different team members in the middle of a play. It's strictly a two-player game, while *Starbowl* offers one- *and* two-player versions. The one-player practice mode is convenient for learning how to handle the offensive plays, though. Documentation includes an excellent chart of the path of receivers and other team members in each play, and can be referred to during the game. Overall, it's not quite as authentic as *Starbowl*, but much more playable. Another plus—it's on cartridge.

Atari, for Atari

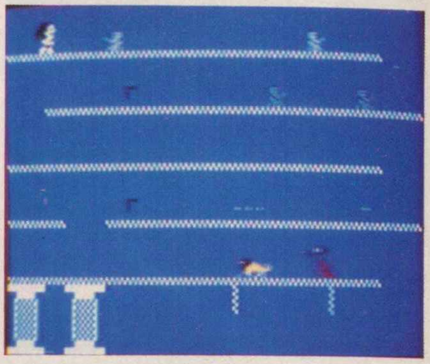


DRAGONRIDERS OF PERN B

This isn't a true adventure or role-playing game, but it conveys enough vicarious experience of another reality to qualify as a variation. (There are no locations to explore, no hit points or gold to keep track of, and no real parser.) You choose your actions from menus that list the people you can negotiate with and whether you want to be conciliatory, forceful, etc. The goal is to convince the Lords of Pern to form alliances with you to kill off the deadly alien "Thread" that fall from the sky occasionally. (You get two points for each new ally; it takes 20 to win.) This plot is based on a series of science fiction novels by Anne McCaffrey, and her readers will probably have more fun with this game than anyone else.

That doesn't mean *you* won't enjoy it. The wheeling and dealing necessary to win over the Lords offers a different type of challenge, not the typical "kill and loot" formula of most role-playing games. A hi-res animated scene breaks in at the end of each turn. You get to fly a dragon around the sky, breathing fire on the Thread. This offers a break from dealing with the Lords of Pern, who can get pretty tedious after a few turns. You can save a game to disk (and will probably want to, for a couple of years!).

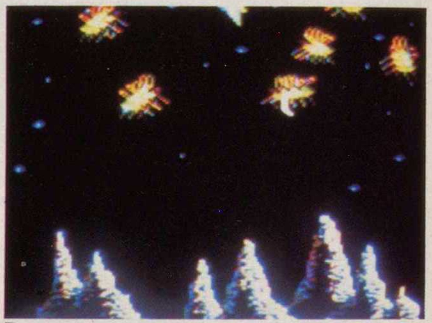
Epyx, for Atari and C-64



SAMSON AND DELILAH F-

This is the worst game we've seen since *Revenge of the Beefsteak Tomatoes*. You should burn in hell before paying good money for dogs like this.

Davka, for C-64



DRAGONHAWK B-

Did you even notice that the home version of *Joust* doesn't let you "flap your wings" by pressing the fire button like in the arcade game? (No, Andy, tell us more.) If you miss that action, *Dragonhawk*'s for you. It's a similar scenario in which you have to keep 'em flappin' or succumb to gravity. Your dragon won't die when he hits the ground, but becomes much more susceptible to the beaks and claws of the buzzards, iguanas, dragons and other well-animated creatures that flit across the unfriendly skies.

Hit the enemy from above and he dies; one of your five lives is wiped out if the creature's even slightly higher than you at the time of the collision. Move fast, because deadly lightning bolts streak through the air if you don't clear a level (there are six in all) of creatures in time. One interesting effect: when you kill a beast, a white feather appears in his place and drifts to the ground. The game offers three difficulty settings, is plenty of fun and would have received an A if it weren't such an obvious clone.

Creative Software, for Commodore 64

SCHOOL'S OUT!

THE LATEST IN EDUCATIONAL GAMING

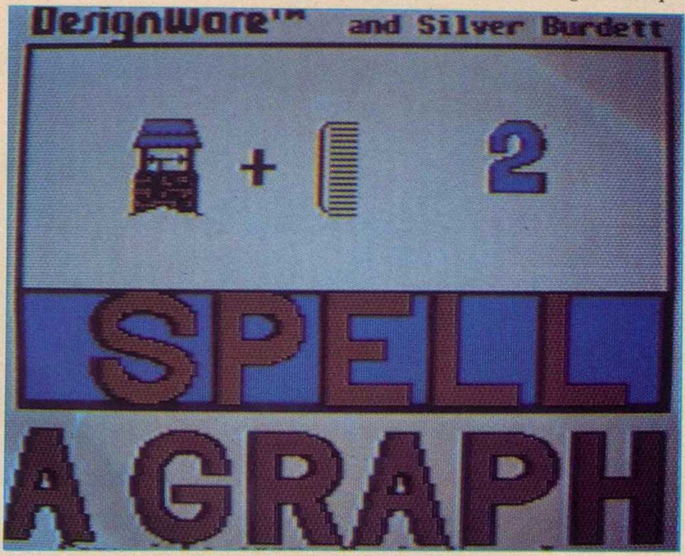
TRAPPING ZOIDS AND POLYGONS

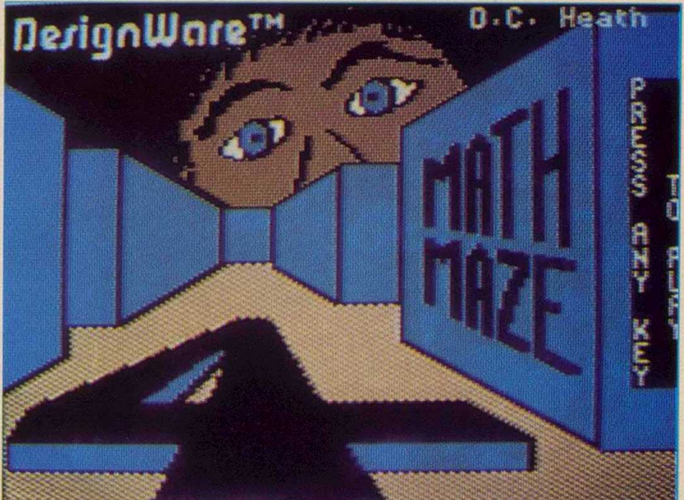
By Dr. Raymond Dimetrosky

If you've ever watched the TV show *Concentration,* then you are already familiar with the basic concept of *Spellagraph*. Instead of answering questions, you must correctly spell words in order to reveal a piece of the rebus (a word-picture puzzle). The computer presents you with a sentence with one word missing. Your only clue to the word is its first letter. If you spell the word correctly, then you get to take a guess at the puzzle. If you make a mistake, then you must correctly spell the word in order to get a chance at another word.

Spellagraph is great fun, and really encourages the child to learn his or her spelling words. Educationally, the program is excellent—the words are taken from *Silver Burdett Spelling,* a series used in school systems across the country. *Spellagraph* is appropriate for children from grades two through eight. There are a total of 20 spelling lists available, and they focus on everything from short "a" sounds (grade two) to adjoining vowels (grade eight). The grade level appears next to each list. You have the option of creating your own spelling lists, and you can play *Spellagraph* with various amounts of words. The number of words that you use determines the number of squares in the rebus. After you solve the rebus, the computer displays your success rate and which words you need to practice.

Spellagraph will appeal to a wide range of children in different grades. In fact, even adults can create lists for themselves to improve their own spelling skills. Best of all, it's great fun to solve the puzzles, so you'll enjoy learning how to spell.





***Math Maze* has a great-looking title screen, but the game is too slow and tedious to hold a child's attention.**

Trap-A-Zoid

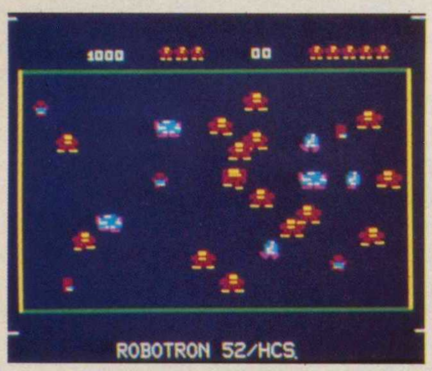
Trap-A-Zoid is an excellent introduction to geometric shapes. You must trap the little blue "zoids" before they trek across the screen. To capture them, surround the little critters with the appropriate points to complete an outline of a shape. You fail if either the creature is not inside the shape when you complete it, or if you produce an incorrect geometric configuration.

There are two ways to increase the challenge of *Trap-A-Zoid.* You can make the zoids run at a faster pace, or you can play at any of five different levels. In level one you must draw triangles, rectangles and squares; level two requires you to create scalene, isosceles and right triangles; at level three your knowledge of quadrilaterals, squares and rectangles is challenged; in level four you must master quadrilaterals, trapezoids and parallelograms; at level five you must correctly draw polygons, hexagons and octagons. Obviously, to play at the higher levels it is necessary to have a greater knowledge of geometry.

If there is one drawback to *Trap-A-Zoid,* it's the game's limited appeal. If you're interested in learning about basic geometry, then *Trap-A-Zoid* will initially appear to be interesting. The problem is that, in no time, the game becomes rather boring. But there's no denying that it teaches you about geometric shapes. In fact, there's a game option that allows you to answer questions in order to earn bonus points. Add to this the dictionary of geometric terms that can be called up at any time and you have an enjoyable program for introducing children to geometry. *Trap-A-Zoid* may be enthusiastically played and then left on the shelf to gather dust, but in that short period of time it will teach the child a great deal about geometry.

Math Maze is the fourth new release from DesignWare. Your mission here is to travel around the screen collecting numbers in an attempt to complete math problems. The disk features a terrific preview screen with great graphics, but unfortunately, the program quickly becomes redundant. Overall, *Math Maze* is a weaker entry than the other three releases from DesignWare. All are available for Apple, Atari, C-64.

VIDEO GAME BUYER'S GUIDE



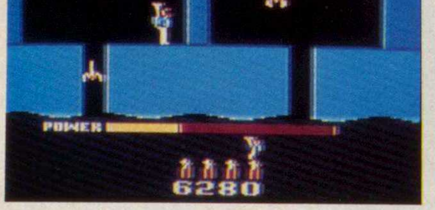
ROBOTRON 2084

A-

A new futuristic robot has been developed. These beauties are so advanced, they can actually think on their own. Unfortunately, they think they'll take over the world by destroying the humans and turning them into mutants. You, of course, are man's only hope. Shoot the robots while saving the last human family.

Robotron 2084 is a successful translation of the arcade hit. The designers realized that the biggest weakness of the 5200 is the controller, so they give you the option of playing with either one joystick or two. If you choose to play with two joysticks, you snap them into a plastic holder, which greatly improves your control. Now, you maneuver with your left joystick while firing with your right. The graphics are good and the sound effects are adequate, but the real plus here is the frantic pace of the game.

Atari, for 5200



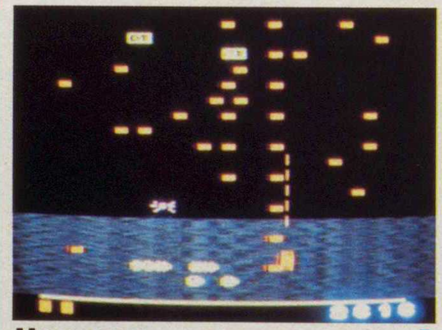
HERO

B

You are R. Hero, a rescue expert who saves trapped miners. The miners are buried inside a volcanic mountain which is filled with molten lava, shifty shaft bats, menacing mine moths and slippery snakes. Thanks to your "prop pack," you can fly down the shafts of the mine. When you run into an obstacle, you can destroy it by shooting beams from your laser helmet. Even blocked tunnels can be eliminated by setting off dynamite. At times, you must work in the dark, since many of the lanterns are destroyed.

Hero successfully combines an adventure contest with a shoot-'em-up. The vertically scrolling screen adds to the feeling that you're really traveling deep into the ground, and there are enough obstacles to keep you jumping. You can begin play at one of five levels of difficulty (a feature seldom found in adventure contests), so younger children and more advanced players will be challenged. The graphics and sound effects are adequate, but nothing to write home about. Gamers who are *really* into adventures may be disappointed by the redundancy of the mines. There's more action here than adventure.

Activision, for Atari VCS



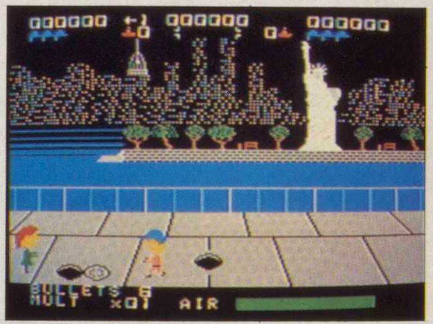
MILLIPEDE

B

Millipede really deserves two grades: an A for play action and a C for graphics. If you expect this one to look anything like the arcade game, you're in for a disappointment. As with the VCS edition of *Centipede, Millipede* suffers from blocky graphics that are far from thrilling. On the other hand, the play action is stupendous. Somehow the designers have managed to catch the game play of the original.

Millipede is more a test of your reflexes than anything else. Strategy can help to improve your score, but eye-hand coordination is really the key here. In later rounds the gamer is bombarded by everything under the sun. Anything this frantic is bound to be a challenge, and that's where the addicting quality of *Millipede* begins. The VCS joystick provides surprisingly good movement, and it's even better with a trackball. It will be interesting to see how the 5200 edition of *Millipede* stacks up.

Atari, for Atari VCS



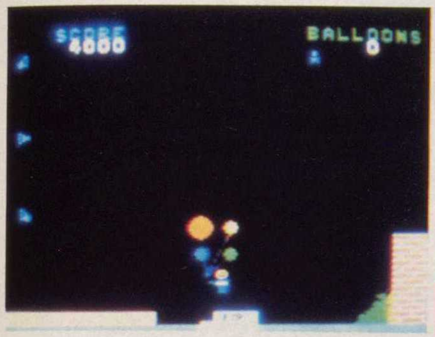
SEWER SAM

B-

Remember those stories people used to tell about baby crocodiles that roamed the sewer systems? You knew that there was no truth to the rumor, yet you had to wonder. Well, *Sewer Sam* has fallen into the sewers and found everything from crocodiles and snakes to sharks and bats. There's even an enemy submarine. Sam must shoot and dodge the smaller obstacles in order to reach the enemy sub. If he eliminates it, he gets to exit the sewers to a rousing chorus of *The Star Spangled Banner.*

Sewer Sam would be a rather ordinary game were it not for the outstanding soundtrack. You see, *Sewer Sam* talks! When a nasty attacks him, Sam responds with a quiet "ouch" or a screeching "oh no!" The soundtrack really adds to the excitement and helps to compensate for the rather ordinary graphics and play action. Younger children may have difficulty with *Sewer Sam*—even the easiest versions are quite a challenge. But for most gamers, the novelty of the voices will make the game worthwhile.

Interphase, for ColecoVision and Adam



GUST BUSTER

B

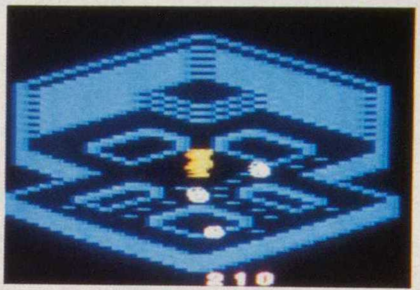
Your job is to sell as many balloons as possible while traveling through an amusement park. And how do you get around? Why, by floating through the air, of course. To inflate your balloons, you press the right button on your joystick. The number on the keypad determines which of the four balloons you are filling. The wind controls your flight, so you must inflate and deflate the balloons to produce the proper altitude and direction. If you overfill the balloons, they'll burst.

Gust Buster is one of the more innovative releases of late. The amusement park scrolls underneath as you float by, and it is very realistic. There's everything here from fireworks to an airport with flying planes. The real fun comes from trying to avoid getting hit by stray Roman candles. The graphics are cartoon-like and colorful, but the game is a rather quiet one. You'll hear appropriate sounds when you pass over amusements, but there's no real soundtrack. Perhaps the best innovation of *Gust Buster* is your use of the joystick. You never touch it! You control all your movements by two buttons.

The Commodore 64 version, on the other hand, does use the joystick. The fire button is used to pump air into the balloons and you push the stick in the direction of the balloon you want to fill.

One drawback to *Gust Buster* is the way you score points. Whenever you land on the crowd, you sell your balloons. But you actually never move an inch, and the crowd will come to *you!* But this is a small weakness. Gamers, especially young ones, will have a great time at this amusement park.

Sunrise, for ColecoVision and Adam. Also for C-64.



CRYSTAL CASTLES

D+

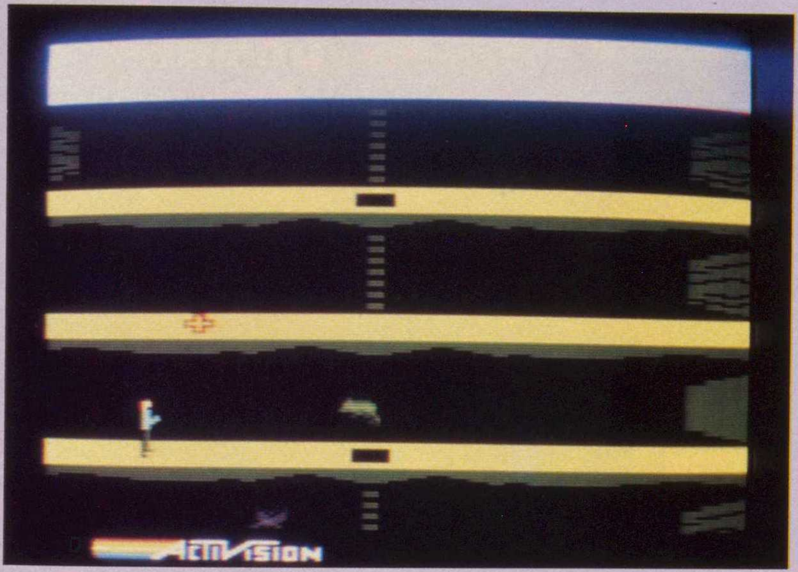
Recently, Atari has released a batch of VCS games that are pretty good. This wave of winners began with *Ms. Pac-Man,* and it didn't seem as if it would let up. Well, the string of successes has just been broken.

Here you control a bear who wanders around a castle, crossing squares as he steps over them. The problems begin almost immediately. Sometimes it's difficult to maneuver the bear around. The poor guy gets stuck in corners, and your joystick doesn't seem to be responsive enough to quickly free him. This feeling is annoyingly reminiscent of a trip through the maze of the 2600 edition of *Pac-Man.* When your furry friend *does* go where he's supposed to, he doesn't always succeed in erasing the squares. Add to this some dreadful graphics, flickering characters and an almost nonexistent soundtrack and you get the full picture. Worst of all, *Crystal Castles* is boring. The game is a little better when played with a trackball, but even so it has none of the excitement of Atari's excellent arcade game.

This is a good example of a game that should never have been attempted on a machine as limited as the Atari VCS. *Crystal Castles,* like *Jungle Hunt* before it, is too graphically complicated to be accurately reproduced. The result can still be a fun game, but players can't expect arcade-like graphics.

Atari, for Atari VCS

VIDEO GAME OF THE MONTH



PITFALL II

A+

Pitfall Harry's back, and boy, has the wait been worth it! How can any sequel to a game as terrific as *Pitfall* possibly reach that level of excellence? Well, *Pitfall II* is not only as good as *Pitfall,* in some respects it's better!

Harry's explorations take him to the mysterious Lost Caverns in search of his niece Rhonda, Quickclaw the cat, gold bars and the Raj diamond. Unlike Pitfall, this is both a vertically and horizontally scrolling game. Most of your time is spent climbing up and down. This change adds a new dimension to *Pitfall II,* and keeps the game from being a carbon copy of *Pitfall.* The caverns, which are 28 levels deep, seem to be enormous.

If *Pitfall II* stopped here, it would be as good as *Pitfall,* but there's much more. Instead of just running, now Harry swims across a river with waterfalls and flies in the sky by holding onto a balloon! Your penalty for bumping into a dangerous enemy (poisonous frogs, electric eels, bats and condors) is no longer the loss of a life —you simply return to the last red cross you touched. The graphics are at least as good as those in *Pitfall,* and the sound effects and music are far superior. So, dust off the old 2600, and get ready for a terrific new game.

Activision, for Atari VCS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

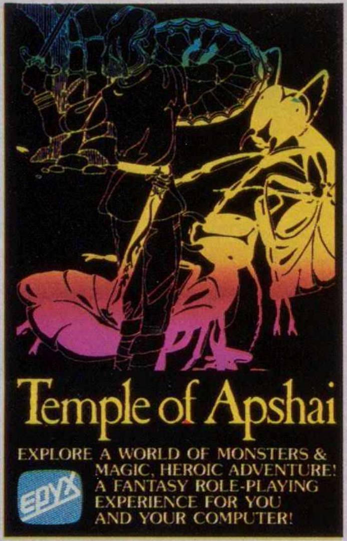
down just far enough so that the screen goes blank, then pull the switch up and down until a screen appears that looks as though your vertical hold isn't set correctly. In a few seconds, the picture will settle and you will be on the second screen of play. Get killed as quickly as possible. When you come back to life, a strange display of graphics will be where the number of ships usually is. You will have about 500 ships at your disposal.

Brad Inman

ZORK FAN

Are there any adventure games for Atari computers that have multiple player roles (wizard, elf, hero, etc.), individual characteristics (strength, intelligence, dexterity, etc.) or multiple participation (one player controlling movement and another player controlling fighting)? I am a big fan of *Zork* and *Wizardry*

Tom Lang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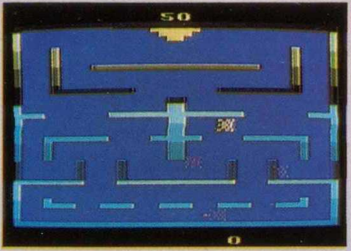
DISAPPEARING GAMES

A few issues back you mentioned some games by a company called Zimag—*River Rat, Collision Course, I Want My Mommy* and *Tanks But No Tanks*. When will you be reviewing these games?

Robert Heiden



Tanks But No Tanks

Actually, we reviewed those games, but Zimag decided to pull out of the games business just before the games were released.

NEXT WAVE

WELCOME LUCASFILMS!

The creators of the Star Wars trilogy are about to create their first computer games. We travel to Lucasfilm studios to give you all the details.

GET BETTER GRAPHICS!

A Sony Trinitron is fine, but you might consider buying a color monitor for your computer. We'll tell you all you need to know so you can decide which, if any, monitor you should buy.

RUN FOR PRESIDENT!

Who cares about Reagan and Mondale and Hart and Jackson? Now you can run for president with your home computer.

MIND GAMES!

When Space Invaders *hit the screen, did you ever imagine that computer games would be* intellectual? *Here's a slew of games to stimulate your medulla oblongata.*

NOT TO MENTION . . .

Reviews of all the new games! Swap Shop! Beat It! Gossip! The Hotline! Eternal happiness! Get it August 17th!

SO THERE

I'm writing you this letter on behalf of Steve Harris's high score of 450,974 on *Dragon's Lair*. Well, sorry Steve, but I just got a score of 475,487 today, so eat your heart out, Stevie.

Butch Bundick

FAT CHANCE

I think your magazine is great, except for the fact that it is always putting down the TI 99/4A. I live in Okinawa, Japan, and on this base there are about 50 computer owners and 18 of them own the TI. We are having problems getting programs, so it would be nice if you could personally send me some. I hope you quit putting down TI.

Bryan Smith

Now that TI is no longer making home computers, there's nothing for us to put down. Oops, we did it again! Sorry, we don't send out free software.

AND THEN WHAT?

My highest score on *Q*Bert* is 75,000. Is there any end to the game after the 36th board? I've read there are nine levels, each with four rounds. So what happens after that?

Mark Alpiger

According to Walter "Coily" Day, after the 36th board, the ninth level repeats indefinitely. The world record in the game belongs to Rob Gerhardt—33,273,520.

HELP!

I recently bought Infocom's *Starcross* for the Commodore 64. I have a problem. I tried everything I can think of to get through the red outer door or past the wall on the red dock. Do you have any suggestions?

Patrick Ray

Push the fourth button and take the black crystal.

SHACK ATTACK

Regarding your article evaluating which computer plays games best, I would like to interject a few facts into your biased opinion. Since I suspect you will not have the guts to print this letter, your tainted view will forever stand to be taken by the unknowing as truth.

How surprised I was to see that you even included the TRS-80 Color Computer! Since you chose to do so, you could at least present the truth.

CoCo has 16-64K memory. It is supported by an extensive library of software. The high resolution mode is 256 × 192. It has one voice, but is capable of four-voice polyphonic synthesization accessable through machine language.

To cut short what could become a lengthy discussion, let's just say that all the facts must be known before one can make a decision on which computer does what best. It seems that all the game magazines tend to ignore the TRS-80 Color Computer.

Larry K. Williams, Sr.

Got a question? Got a gripe? Just want a half a million people to see your name in print? Punch your initials in here, partner, and write: Letters to the Editor, ***Computer Games****, 888 7th Ave., New York, NY 10106.*

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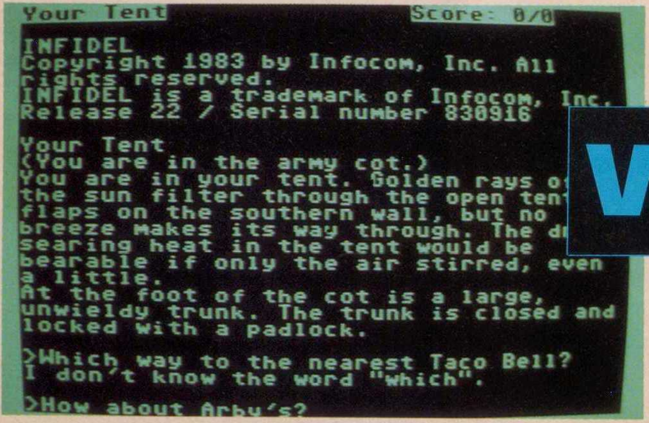
ONE ON ONE

INFIDEL

(Infocom, for all home computers)

SANDS OF EGYPT

(Datasoft, for Apple, Atari)



```
Your Tent                   Score: 0/0
INFIDEL
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Release 22 / Serial number 830916

Your Tent
(You are in the army cot.)
You are in your tent. Golden rays o
the sun filter through the open ten
flaps on the southern wall, but no
breeze makes its way through. The d
searing heat in the tent would be
bearable if only the air stirred, even
a little.
At the foot of the cot is a large,
unwieldy trunk. The trunk is closed and
locked with a padlock.

>Which way to the nearest Taco Bell?
I don't know the word "which".

>How about Arby's?
```
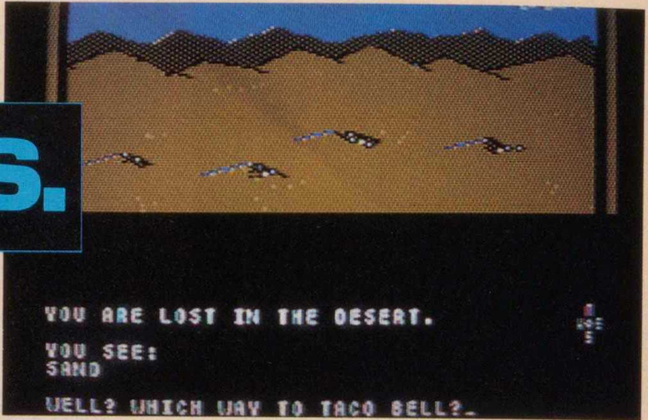

VS.



```
YOU ARE LOST IN THE DESERT.

YOU SEE:
SAND

WELL? WHICH WAY TO TACO BELL?_
```

HOW DIFFERENT CAN TWO GAMES ABOUT A SEARCH FOR LOST EGYPTIAN pyramids be? *Very.* One is rewarding, the other frustrating. One is engrossing, the other dehumanizing and rude. In a word, *Infidel* is fun, and *The Sands of Egypt* isn't.

Despite the fact that *Infidel* is all-text, there's no lack of graphics. By providing text description for your interpretation, Infocom lets *you* supply the pictures. You mind isn't limited by the graphic capabilities of your computer. This leads to a vivid game that's enjoyable whether you solve it or not.

In the game's opening scene, you're an archeologist who awakes and finds that disgruntled workers have deserted you in the middle of the Sahara: "The stillness seems to enhance the eerie quality of the desert, the feeling of being truly alone...." The prose is descriptive, often funny, and realistic enough to pass for a pulp novel. The game's parser (which interprets the commands you type in) is enormous, with a vocabulary of over 600 words compared to *Sand*'s 100. They include adjectives and other parts of speech, not just nouns and verbs.

A navigation box helps you get your bearings while searching for the pyramid. If you wander too far into the desert, you'll witness some hilarious hallucinations, brought on by heat stroke. Inside the tomb, you'll be confronted with perplexing puzzles that are typical of adventure games. But *Infidel* offers a new kind of clue: Egyptian hieroglyphics, in the form of characters like #, ! and others. You have to decipher most of them (a partial translation left by a previous explorer gets you started) in order to make real progress in the game. The aforementioned sense of solitude is accentuated inside the pyramid, because you're all alone in this game, unlike others from Infocom. There are no characters like *Planetfall*'s Floyd or *Zork*'s Thief to interact with.

The packaging bursts with witty and covertly helpful support materials. You'll get a tongue-in-cheek instruction booklet (cleverly presented as an adventurer's magazine), various maps, and an unmailed letter whose contents belie the serious nature of your situation.

In *Sands,* you're lost, and I mean lost in every sense of the word—up the Nile without a paddle. The documentation tells little more than how to load the game. The section called "Strategy" carries on with the usual nauseating, contrived preamble about how and why you are here.

The "here" here is also the desert. Animated graphics show sand swirling across the desert in the top half of the screen, while text below reads: "You are lost in the desert . . . you are thirsty." Move in any direction and you're treated to the same bleak picture. Move 30 times in the same direction and you might stumble across a shovel, but otherwise *Sands* doesn't offer the variety of *Infidel*'s desert.

Growing desperate, I consulted the instruction booklet, this time under the heading "Hints." Hint #1: "If you see something interesting in the picture or read something intriguing in the text, you can always GO there." Yes, *you* might find something interesting, but the computer won't always agree with you. I resent it when a computer does the looking and judging for me. Hint #2 wasn't helpful either, telling me to type "Help." The game then countered with a cryptic clue: "Danger lurks at every turn." Thanks for reminding me.

Compared to *Infidel, Sands* is obnoxious. The command cursor, for example, is followed by "Well?" It's as if an unspoken voice is prodding you to "Get a move on, dummy!" According to the plot, you're no dummy, but Lord Charles Buckingham III. A character of such lofty credentials would have been more at home in *Infidel.* Here he's a bumbling idiot.

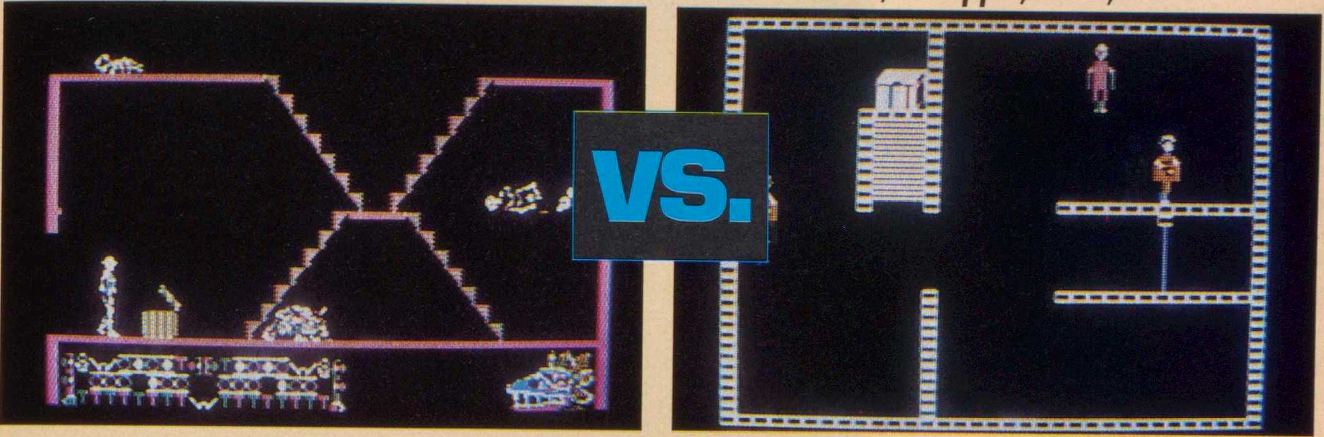
Sands is not without merit. The animated graphics outclass those generated by most adventures of this type. But even animated graphics don't compare to *Infidel*'s prose, and the better choice is obvious in this case.

CLUE #6: WRONGWAY AND COILY

ONE ON ONE

AZTEC
(Datamost, for Apple, C-64)

CASTLE WOLFENSTEIN
(Muse, for Apple, Atari, C-64)



AZTEC, CLEARLY INSPIRED BY *RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK,* AND *Wolfenstein* (whose author says *The Guns of Navarrone* sparked his imagination) look, play and capture all the thrills of their cinematic inspirations. Don't expect either to collect much dust. *Castle* casts you as a prisoner of war. Your mission is to secure the Nazis' battle plans for Operation Rheingold and escape. Armed with a pistol and one clip of ammo, you begin the journey on the castle's lowest level.

Moving from chamber to chamber, you must shoot your way past Nazi guards and stormtroopers. Dead guards can be searched and stripped of their ammo, keys and grenades. You can move and fire in eight directions. Most rooms contain strongboxes that can be opened with keys found on the guards, or shot open. Some hold ammo, grenades or bulletproof vests. Still others are full of schnaps or food, but only one has the plans you seek. The game offers three control modes, keyboard, paddles and joystick/keyboard. Surprisingly, the keyboard proved most effective.

Played in real time, it's more action than adventure, and there are no puzzles to solve. Still, the game does require some strategy, but on a more subtle level. The object is not to run from the Germans as you run from the ghosts in *Pac-Man.* Instead, you stalk and outsmart them. At first you get a few seconds to plot strategy upon entering a new room. Later on, that time decreases or, even worse, is nonexistent. Since you have only one game life, the program should be more forgiving.

Some quirks: the pistol is particularly deadly from a distance, but often misses at point-blank range. When a guard stops you, you're quickly captured and the game ends. (If you draw first, he'll surrender and you can search him. But lower your gun for an instant and he'll blow you away without hesitation.) The game is tough, but does have a soft side—humor that's intrinsic to any Nazi-Limey confrontation. The guards goosestep around the rooms, and shout "Kapput!" when you die and "Schwienhund!" when you escape. No voice-synthesis boards or peripherals are required.

I have nothing but praise for *Aztec.* According to the storyline, "a fabulous golden Idol" is hidden somewhere within the Mexican pyramid. An eccentric archeologist, Professor Von Foerster, has already descended into the depths of the temple but failed to return with the prize. Rumor has it that von Foerster is insanely jealous of the unattainable idol, and booby-trapped the pyramid to protect the idol from other explorers.

The temple consists of eight floors, each of which contains eight rooms. Rooms are further divided into levels (up to three). As you move your Indiana Jones-like figure through the temple, you'll encounter a number of hazards and unsavory characters, including spiders, snakes, scorpions, Aztec warriors and dinosaurs. You start off with three sticks of dynamite and three units of strength. You'll lose a little of that vitality each time a creature sinks its teeth into you.

Your score is determined by the difficulty level (there are eight) and the time it takes to retrieve the idol and escape. Those of you who have learned from other games to kill everything in sight will be saddened to know that "no extra points are given for wanton destruction or unnecessary killing." And while destruction is definitely not the point of the game, being quick with the trigger certainly helps.

Aztec boasts superior animation, and *Wolfenstein* is adequate. You have no choice but keyboard control with *Aztec;* no problem here, because it allows for more options than a joystick ever could. Both games guarantee long term playability. With each new contest, they generate new layouts unless you choose to start over with the same one. Both allow you to save to disk a game-in-progress, and no matter which one you choose, you can't lose.

by Michael Blanchet

CONVERSION CAPSULES

HIT GAMES IN NEW FORMATS

DONKEY KONG

(VIC-20) You're just not going to get realistic figures on this machine. Once you get past that problem, *DK* is enjoyable, if not spectacular. It's faster than other versions, making it less of a strategic game and more eye-hand coordination. Three screens. (Atarisoft)

CENTIPEDE

(VIC-20) Excellent graphics for the VIC. The centipede zips down the screen a bit faster than you're used to, and the scorpion is so quick, it's nearly impossible to hit. Centipedes change direction even if they don't hit any mushrooms. Good sounds, good action. One or two players. Pause. (Atarisoft)

CENTIPEDE

(C-64) Slower than both the arcade game and VCS and 5200 versions. Good, but not a great translation. (Atarisoft)

DONKEY KONG

(C-64) Surprisingly slow, difficult and unforgiving for a 64 game. They did a better job on the version for their own computer. (Atarisoft)

ROBOTRON

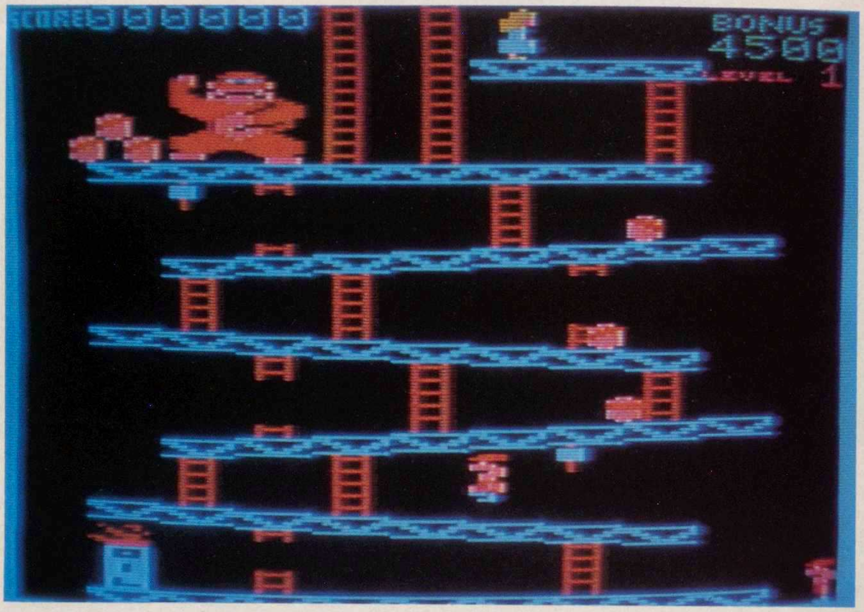
(VIC-20) Don't expect the arcade game. This is slower, blockier and uses just one joystick. It's also easier, and it's still fun. One big flaw—your score only flashes for an instant between waves and at the end of the game. Nine levels. (Atarisoft)

DEMON ATTACK

(IBM PCjr) Stunning space background makes this the most graphically spectacular version of the game, but it's just wallpaper. The play action is similar to the VCS version—excellent. (Imagic)

RIVER RAID

(ColecoVision) This version is almost a carbon copy of the VCS original. One change—the computer now stores the high score of the day. (Activision)



Donkey Kong (VIC-20)

PITFALL A+

(ColecoVision) The great play action of the original remains and there are some improvements here. The graphics are more colorful, the sound effects are richer and there's a terrific cartoon opening. (Activision)

NOVA BLAST B+

(ColecoVision) The VCS version has been improved, thanks to vastly superior graphics. *Nova Blast* is an above-average space shoot-'em-up. (Imagic)

M.U.L.E.

(C-64) This game's like playing *Monopoly* on another planet, where you and up to four others compete in staking out and developing plots of land. A pixel-for-pixel conversion that's appealing to all ages. (Electronic Arts)

PITFALL

(Atari) The 2600 hit comes home to Atari computer gamers. None of the computer's graphic capabilities are used to upgrade the game, so it looks and plays just like the original. Even so, that's better than nothing. (Activision)

SPY'S DEMISE

(Atari) Frenetic action and non-stop music make this "elevator to the top of the building" scenario an outstanding game. At the top, you'll see part of a message—decode it and win $100 in free software (one winner for each state). (Penguin)

GRIDRUNNER

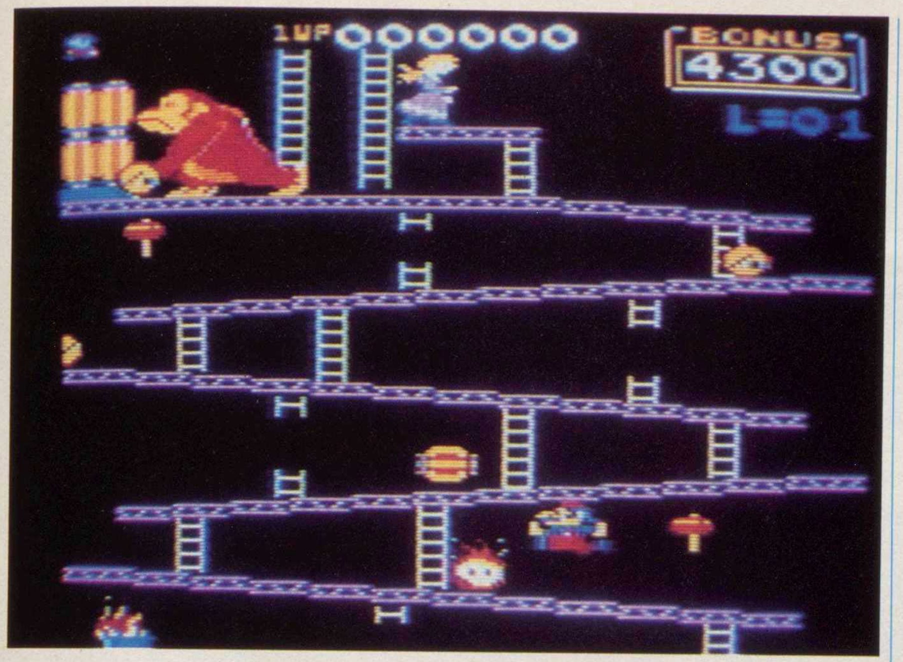
(Atari) One of the fastest shoot-'em-ups ever, this one has the feel and looks of *Centipede*. Sound effects are sensational. Unlike the original, the grid annoyingly flashes like a strobe light while moving up to the next level. Otherwise OK. (HES)

THE SPY STRIKES BACK

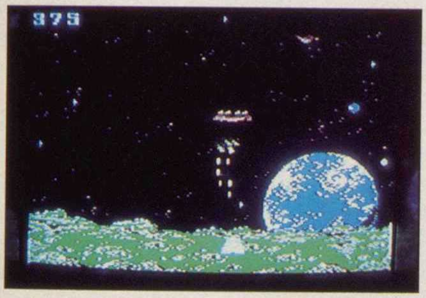
(Atari) In this sequel, you search rooms for cameras, bombs and other spy gear while avoiding fast-moving robots who guard the many-roomed castle. Another coded message, more prizes. (Penguin)

FLIGHT SIMULATOR II

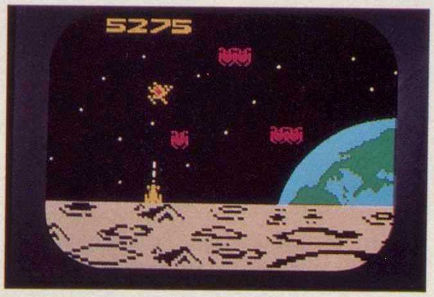
(Atari, C-64) A top-notch simulation whose scenery has been embellished in



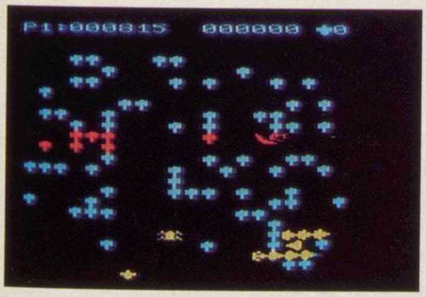
Donkey Kong (C-64)



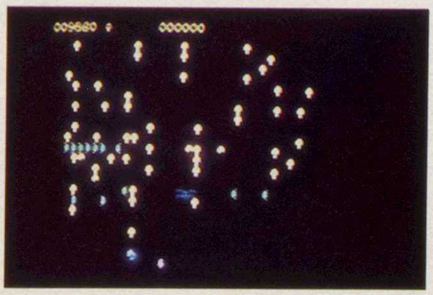
Demon Attack (IBM PCjr)



Demon Attack (Intellivision)



Centipede (VIC-20)



Centipede (C-64)

the translation, this one puts you in an authentically outfitted Piper Cherokee, offers over 80 airports in four areas, and has a WWI dogfight game. (Sublogic)

NIGHT MISSION PINBALL

(C-64) Simply the best computer pinball available. Smashing sounds that push the 64's SID chip to the max, and player-adjustable parameters that let you customize the machine. (Sublogic)

DIG DUG

(C-64) A reasonably faithful rendition of the arcade game with very clean graphics and bouncy music. One question—can anyone tell us what's the big deal about this game anyway? Ten difficulty levels. Pause. (Atarisoft)

ROBOTRON 2084

(C-64) They have got to be kidding. This conversion of the world's most intense arcade game is slow, unwieldy and sounds like an old *Pong* game. Nine levels here, but if you want to save the last human family, drop a quarter in the arcade game. (Atarisoft)

ROBOTRON 2084

(Atari computers) It figures that Atari would make a better version for their own computers than for Commodore's. This one is fantastic! Great graphics, fast action. The game is especially good when played with two joysticks (like the arcade game), and it's a lot of fun to have one player shoot while his partner controls the movement. Intense. A triumph! (Atarisoft)

BEAMRIDER

(ColecoVision) *Beamrider* is an unusual game which boasts good special effects. Trouble is, the novelty quickly wears off, so unless you're really into shoot-'em-ups, you'll quickly become bored. (Activision)

PITFALL

(5200) The 5200 controller is not responsive enough to allow for the fluid movement which is essential to this game. This adaptation features the most colorful graphics yet, but the sound effects are inferior to the ColecoVision version. Even with its weaknesses, the game remains a superior program. (Activision)

SQUISH 'EM

(ColecoVision) A soundtrack which features a talking man keeps *Squish 'Em* from becoming a run-of-the-mill climbing game. Graphics and play action are adequate, but not outstanding. (Interphase)

FATHOM

(ColecoVision) The already superior graphics of the VCS version have been improved, resulting in a stunningly beautiful program. Add the challenging game play, and the result is a real winner. (Imagic)

DRAGONFIRE

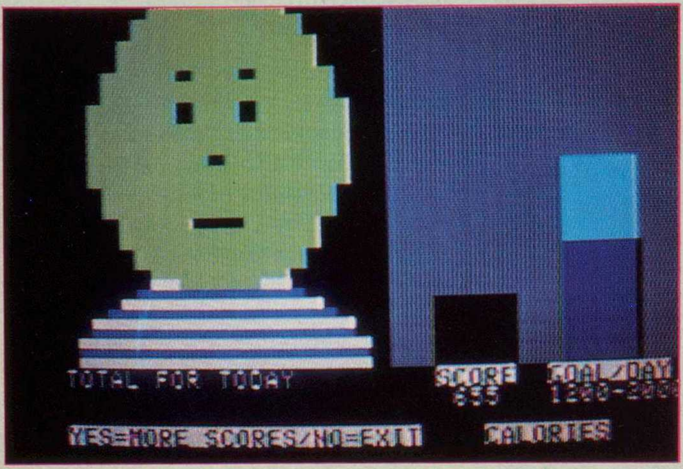
(ColecoVision) Dragonfire looks better here than in any other adaptation. Unfortunately, the game play still leaves something to be desired. (Imagic)

SERIOUS SOFTWARE

NEW APPLICATIONS FOR HOME COMPUTERS

HEY, WHERE'S THE BEEF?

By Shay Addams



This guy wants to put you on a disk drive diet.

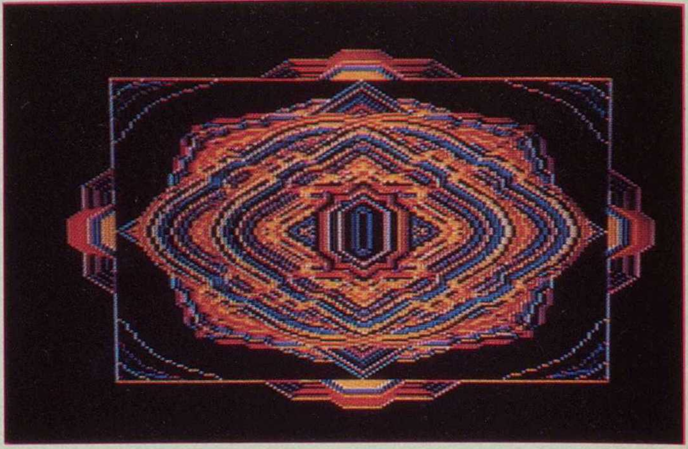
The Eating Machine

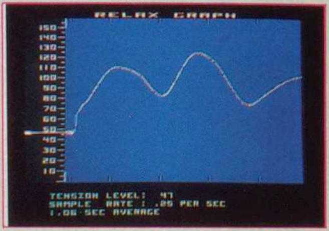
Liz Taylor, come on down! Joan Rivers won't have *you* to kick around anymore—if you heed the dietary advice of this program, which is menu-driven in more ways than one. A big grinning face greets you on the opening screen and waits while you key in your name, sex and age. A caloric range that matches your profile is displayed, noting the high and low number of calories you should aim for in each day's diet.

From the first menu, choose a meal (breakfast, lunch, snacks or dinner), then pick a food group like vegetables, cereal or meat. All selections are entered by pressing the right or left arrow keys to move up and down the menu, and hitting "y" to choose the item next to the cursor. The size of each serving can also be adjusted. That item's caloric value is posted, and you get the option of putting more food on your plate, deleting a previous selection or moving on to the next meal. The total caloric value for the day is updated as each new food is added. Like an electronic spreadsheet, *Eating Machine* will show the effects of gobbling down a whole Boston cream pie instead of an eclair for dessert.

Bar graphs show the percentage of calories derived from fat, protein and other sources, as well as how much of the RDA of essential vitamins is contained in your diet. The face grins or frowns, depending on the outcome. An all-text summary spells out which vitamins are deficient, and recommends foods that contain them. You can also add your favorite foods by creating customized data files that are easy to build.

Muse Software, for Apple





Are you brain-dead?

Relax

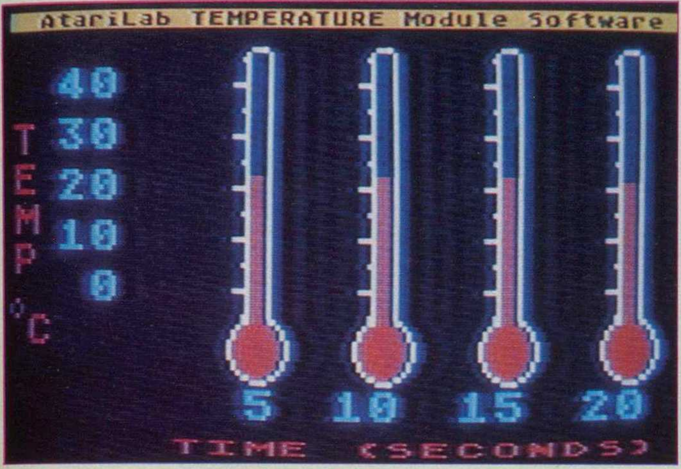
In the Sixties, LSD promised salvation, happiness and bliss. In the Seventies, it was Transcendental Meditation. Now we know what *really* delivers Nirvana—computers. *Relax* is an offbeat device that you strap to your head and plug into your computer to provide an at-home electromyograph. As you stare at the screen, a continuous graph instantaneously registers your level of muscle tension. Meanwhile, you listen through headphones to a tape recording of a soothing voice (Synapse president Ihor Wolosenko) leading your brain in deep relaxation exercises. (As we used to say, "Far out!") The idea is that if you can *see* your tension level, it's easier to learn how to reduce it. You can also discover your unconscious reactions to stimuli you didn't even know were stressful.

The *Relax* program also comes with three tension relaxation games in which colors and patterns on the screen change according to how relaxed you are. It's better than drugs—and cheaper! If you *really* want to get into your brain, you can even program subliminal messages into the program, like "Stop smoking" or "Lose weight" or "Subscribe to *Computer Games*." *Relax* comes with a book that explains the effects of stress and how to reduce it. The program was developed with the help of Dr. Martha Davis, a clinical psychologist at the Kaiser Permanente Medical Center in California. It's the next best thing to electrodes in your brain!

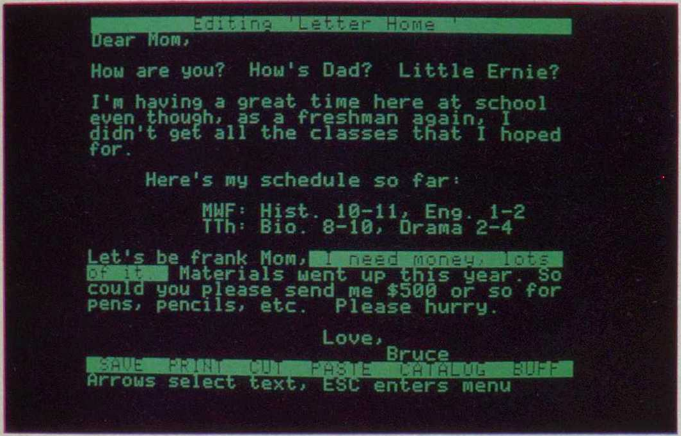
Synapse, for Atari, Commodore 64, Apple, IBM PC and PCjr, and even Atari VCS

AtariLab

Ever wanted to blow up the world? Well, don't count on learning how to do it with *AtariLab*. But if you're interested in using your Atari to conduct all kinds of unusual scientific experiments, it's a remarkable combination of hardware and software designed specifically for *you*. This starter set includes a temperature sensor, Interface Module and a 145-page manual with instructions on how to perform seven temperature-related projects and many other experiments. Newton's Law of Cooling (and Warming), Locke's Test, and similar lessons can be studied and mastered firsthand instead of only by reading about



AtariLab Fever!



```
              Editing 'Letter Home '
Dear Mom,

How are you?  How's Dad?  Little Ernie?

I'm having a great time here at school
even though, as a freshman again, I
didn't get all the classes that I hoped
for.

     Here's my schedule so far:

          MWF: Hist. 10-11, Eng. 1-2
          TTh: Bio. 8-10, Drama 2-4

Let's be frank Mom, I need money, lots
of it.  Materials went up this year. So
could you please send me $500 or so for
pens, pencils, etc.  Please hurry.

                Love,
                     Bruce
 SAVE  PRINT  CUT  PASTE  CATALOG  BUFF
Arrows select text, ESC enters menu
```

Cut 'n' Paste

them.

The Interface Module, which has eight input jacks, plugs into controller port 2; the electronic temperature sensor plugs into the module. This arrangement allows you to observe temperature changes by watching a hi-res thermometer's digital display on the screen, or by viewing an onscreen graph. Graphs and charts may be saved to disk and dumped to an Epson printer.

The amply illustrated manual emphasizes the classical scientific process: discovery, hypothesis, developing a plan, recording and analyzing data, and finally forming a conclusion. With the AtariLab, though, this is a lot more fun than it would be otherwise.

Atari, for Atari computer

Cut & Paste

This is the "People Express" of word processors—no frills, but it will get you there on time.

It omits search and replace, centered lines, underlining and many features that are standard in programs like *Bank Street Writer* and *Homeword.* If you're just writing letters or other home-oriented material, that's no problem. In fact, it's a plus, because this makes *Cut & Paste* much easier to learn.

If the thought of wrangling with dozens of cryptic format commands makes you want to duck behind the nearest Wordstar manual for cover, you'll be relieved to know that this program does away with them entirely. Things such as margins, line spacing and auto-page numbering are set from a menu that appears when you get ready to print. The most advanced feature is the one for which the program's named. Blocks of text can be easily defined by highlighting them with two-stroke commands. After "cutting" a block into the buffer, you can copy or move it anywhere in the document, or load a different file and slap it down there. Menus scroll horizontally on the top and bottom of the screen, and the auto word-wrapped white characters on a blue background stand out clearly. Best of all, most people will be able to process words right away with this program, which can be mastered completely in a matter of hours.

Electronic Arts, for Atari and C-64

PictureWriter

Most of the standard functions of graphics software (automatically drawing squares, rectangles, and filling them with color) are packed into this joystick- or cursor-controlled program. For kids five to fifteen, it also throws in a few extras that are interesting and useful. Few other programs will draw ovals, for example. The last thing you drew can be erased with "Backup," which acts like "Oops" does on the KoalaPad but allows you to keep pressing the key and wipe out as many of the previous "brush strokes" as you desire.

Up to eight colors are available from a menu/pallete on the right side of the screen, and they may be mixed to create different hues. Patterns like those in most graphics software are not included here. But music, rare in such a program, is part of *PictureWriter.* You can pick the notes that play as your picture is redrawn by the computer.

Each drawing can consist of up to 450 different steps, and you can save as many as 60 pictures on a disk. With a Grappler interface and a dot-matrix printer, hard copies of your creations are easy to obtain (in color with the right printer). An onscreen tutorial supplements the 27-page manual, and the program disk contains several sample pictures that can be used like a coloring book.

Scarborough, for Apple

Home Budget, jr

In addition to keeping track of expenses and income on a monthly basis, this program offers the benefit of customizing your own "money plan" in a scaled-down version of the method employed by businesses. Don't worry, you won't need a degree in accounting or bookkeeping. It's menu-driven, and the documentation (a concise 80-page manual) leads you through the process one step at a time. "Help" screens come in handy throughout.

Up to 48 accounts can be included in your budget to reflect regular expenditures like food, rent and computer games. (Your first entry can be $75 for the mandatory cartridge BASIC.) Charge accounts can be entered and stored, too. It's easy to add a new account, or edit an existing one, when these needs arise.

Accounts can be reviewed and printed in a variety of ways: you can call up the entries of a single account or all accounts, for one or all months. From a sub-menu, you can also elect to print or display the accounts' totals or all the information in each one. When examining the status of your budget, the program automatically posts accounts, taking the amount alloted for each and adding it to the account balance. Then you can view the amount budgeted, spent and remaining balance for the month to date and year to date.

IBM, for PCjr, PC and PC XT

SEND NAMES! WIN FREE SUBSCRIPTION!

CONTEST!

WIN A GAME A MONTH FOR A YEAR!

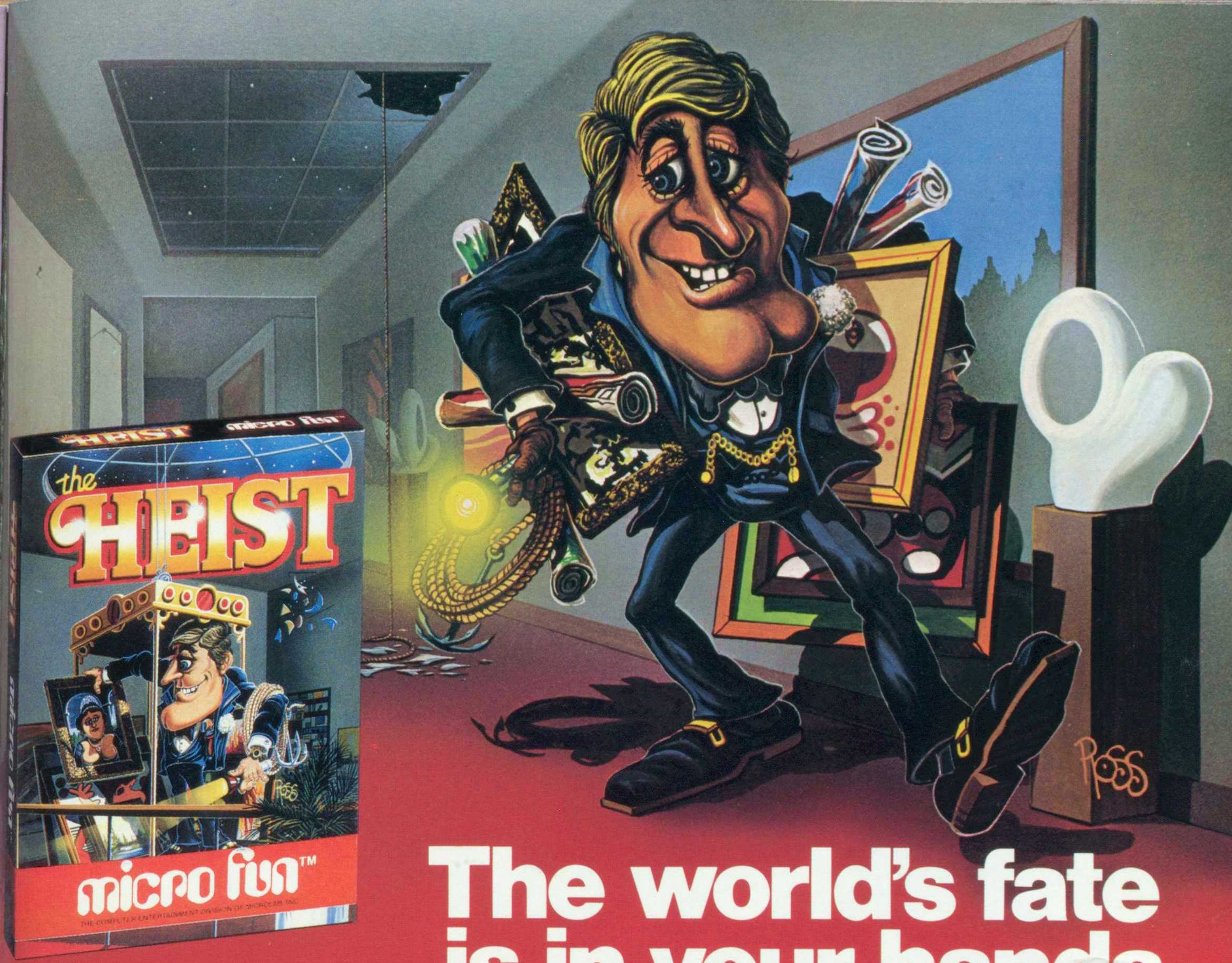
Do you feel lucky today? How would you like to win 12 free games? All you have to do is fill out this coupon (or a reasonable facsimile) and send it to us. We'll put your name into our in-house computer and randomly pick two winners. You may win your next year's worth of games!

This contest applies to the following systems: Apple, Atari computers, Commodore 64 and VIC-20, Atari VCS. We will select the 12 games, and yes, they will be good ones! Void where prohibited by law. One entry per person, please. Deadline for entries is August 14, 1984. Good luck!

Send entries to: Game A Month, *Computer Games Magazine*,
888 7th Ave., New York, NY 10106.

COMPUTER GAMES MAGAZINE
Yes! I want to win a game every month for a year!

Name____________________________
Address__________________________
City________ **State**________ **Zip**________
Computer________________________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The world's fate is in your hands.

SCORE
TIME
01:48
00
02

Picture yourself as the world's greatest super-agent, Graham Crackers.

You must go undercover and sneak into an enormous art museum. Incredibly, it's a front for an international terrorist organization!

Your secret mission is to heist all the artwork in search of a classified microfilm. If you don't carry it off in time, the world is doomed!

Grab the keys to the 90 fiendishly boobytrapped rooms (144 in Apple). Brave the multitude of heart-stopping dangers as you make your tortuous way through the deadly rooms. Test your cunning against overwhelming odds!

Chilling suspense and unknown terrors await you behind every door. You must evade man-eating robots, monstrous stompers, sweeper drones and tons of falling boxes — and make death-defying leaps from moving platforms.

Only your artful handling of this dangerous assignment can save the world from destruction!

For Apple II & IIe, IBM PC & jr, Atari, Commodore 64, ColecoVision & Adam.

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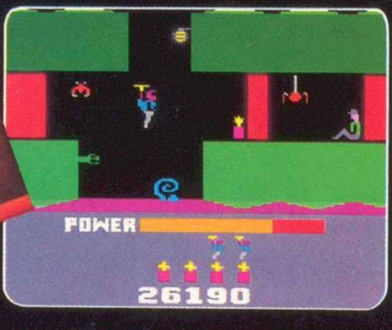
Helicopter prop-pack
Dynamite
Micro-laser helmet
A maze of shafts
Blocked passageways
A many tentacled beast
Mine moths
Nesting snakes
Jumping spiders
Magma walls
Lava rivers
A raft
Lanterns
Limited oxygen
Decreasing power
Crushing walls
Trapped miners
Not necessarily, certainly not necessarily, in that order.

Or any order.

When a volcano erupts above a mine, it's not exactly an orderly event. For one thing miners are trapped, but that's only ONE thing. Did Rod Hero tell you what you'd be up against when you joined him in this mercy mission?

First, you've got to fly the helicopter prop-pack and learn to use the wall-blasting dynamite and micro-laser helmet.

H.E.R.O.
ACTIVISION



Next, all you have to do is get through to the miners. It's the 'get through' that gets messy. And the deeper you go, the messier it gets. You can bring a whole lot to this rescue operation…but you just can't bring order.

H.E.R.O. designed by John Van Ryzin. Currently for the Atari® 2600™ available this summer for major game and home computer systems.

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H.E.R.O.™

Helicopter Emergency Rescue Operation

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